

FRANCINE AND BEULAH GO ONE ON ONE!

INSIDE WRESTLING

Inside Wrestling

**AHMED JOHNSON
REVEALS:**

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The Nation
Of Domination!"**

**The Inner Turmoil
That's Tearing
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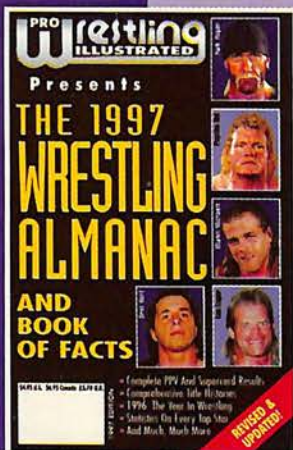
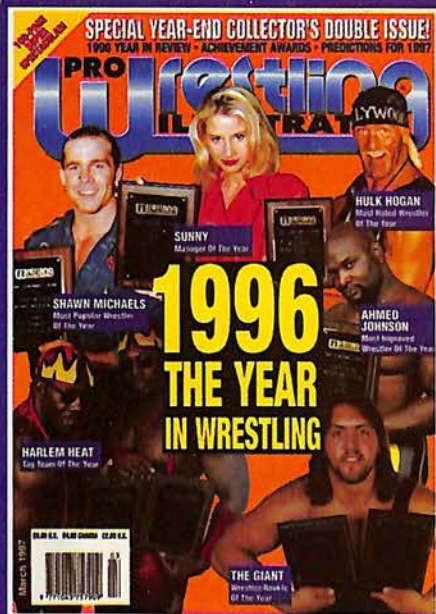
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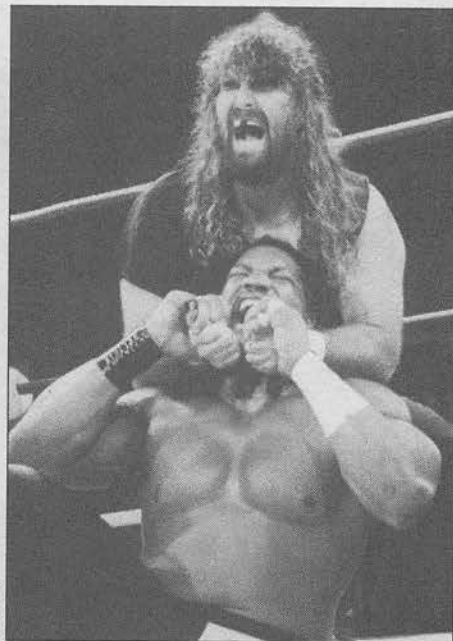
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JUNE 1997

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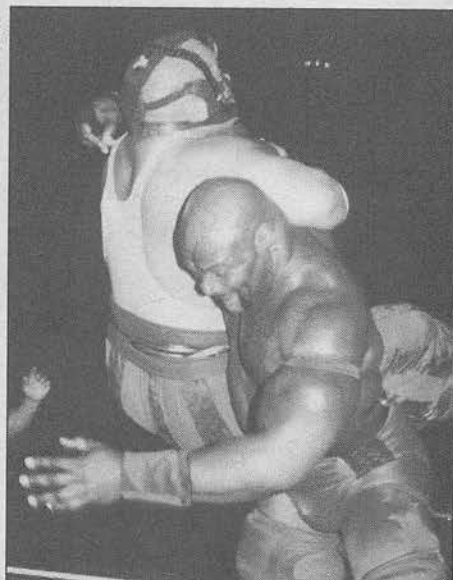
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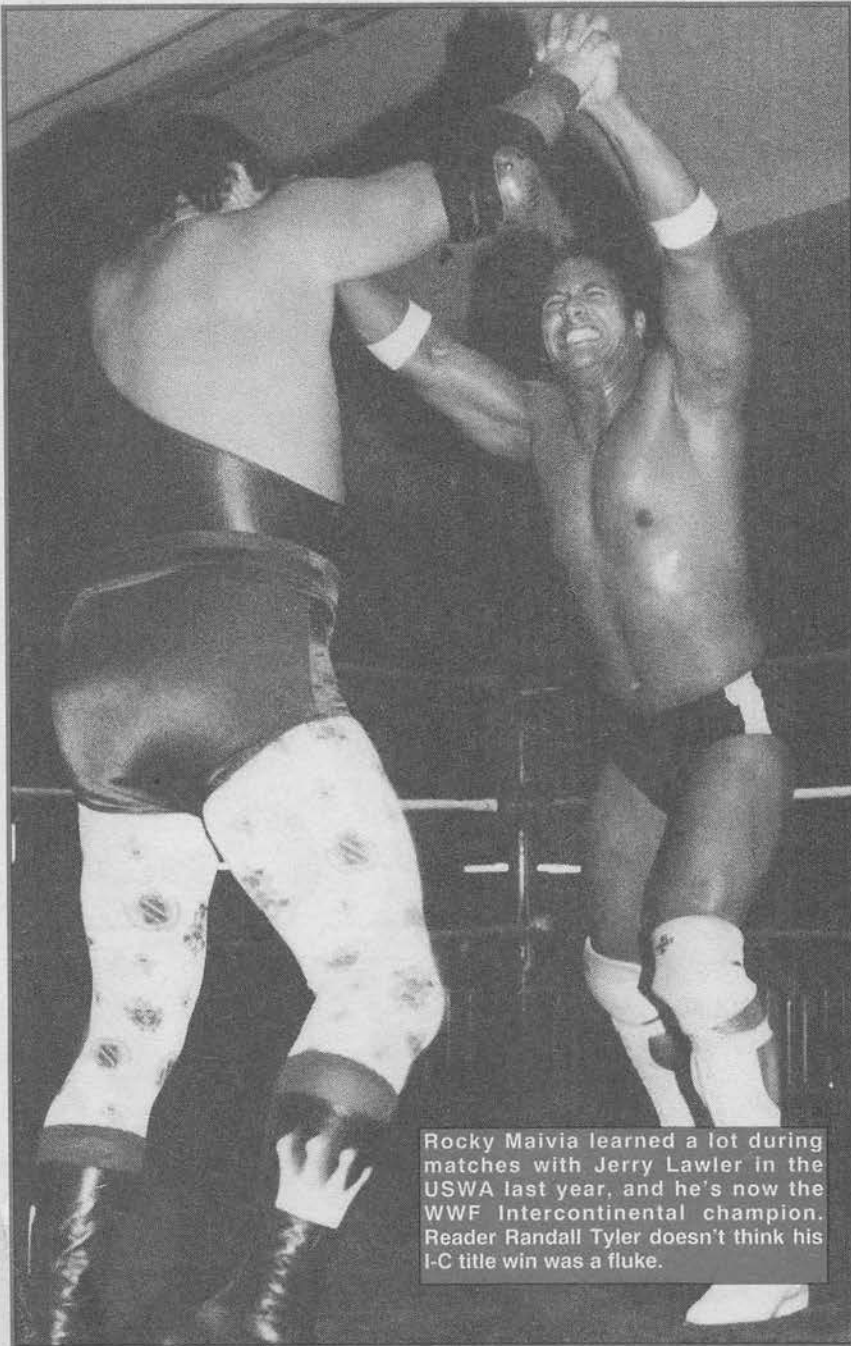


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Sincerely Yours

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Rocky Maivia learned a lot during matches with Jerry Lawler in the USWA last year, and he's now the WWF Intercontinental champion. Reader Randall Tyler doesn't think his I-C title win was a fluke.

ROUGH ROAD FOR ROCKY

Rocky Maivia is currently one of the hottest wrestlers around. Not that many wrestlers can boast about winning a major title so early in their careers. He defeated a great athlete in Hunter Hearst Helmsley when he won the Intercontinental championship. Critics like Jerry Lawler argue that Maivia's victory was a fluke. Forget it, "King"! Maivia learned from the best and wrestled the best, and that includes you, Lawler. I think Maivia learned a lot from wrestling "The King" in the USWA, so Lawler shouldn't be so quick to brush him off.

I have to agree with Lawler on one thing: Maivia will have a difficult time retaining the title. There are a lot of great superstars in the WWF. Then again, most of those superstars are locked up in feuds. Bret Hart, Sid Vicious, Steve Austin, Vader, and The Undertaker are fighting over the World title. Goldust is feuding with Helmsley. Marc Mero is at a crossroads in his WWF career. If these scenarios continue to play out, Maivia will have enough time to prepare for these seasoned athletes.

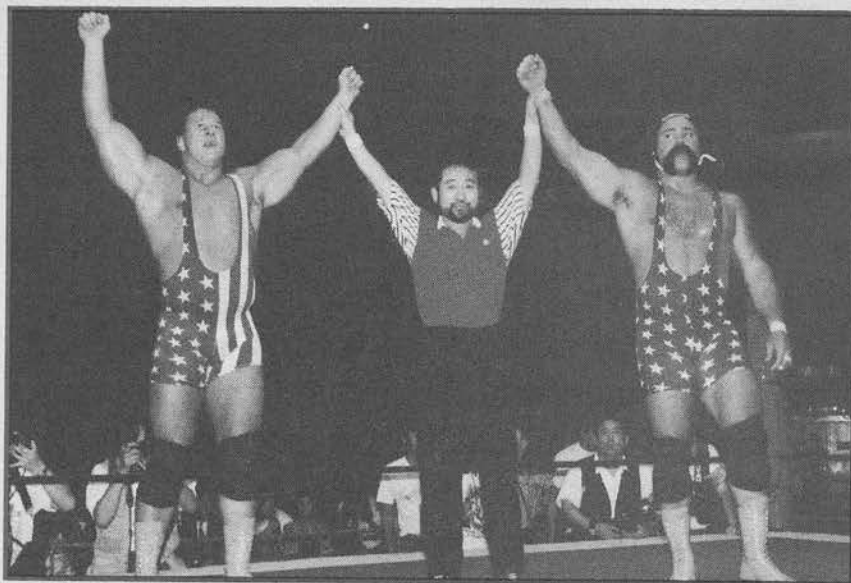
Maivia will soon become an even stronger force in professional wrestling. The Intercontinental title will be just one of numerous belts that the young star will win during his career. Maivia's next step will be the WWF World title.

RANDALL TYLER
Asbury Park, NJ

STEINERS SPLIT?

Rick and Scott Steiner will never stop teaming, despite what was written in your April '97 issue ("Is Rick Steiner Searching For A New Partner?"). Unlike the Harts and the Rottens, Rick and Scott Steiner have a special bond that is hard to explain. The Steiners have been a tag team for most of their careers, and that time has strengthened their brotherly bond.

The Hart situation, on the other hand, was a bomb ready to explode from the beginning, since Bret and Owen never seemed to respect



Are we about to see the Steiners split? No way, says Jason T. Decker, who believes Rick and Scott are too close to go their separate ways.

each other. They had never wrestled with each other on a regular basis; both men had separate agendas. The Steiners know they have one agenda, and that's to win world tag titles. Although both men have done well on their own, too, they still remain loyal to each other. These men realize that they make a great team, and why ruin greatness? So, INSIDE WRESTLING, don't use rumor and speculation to divide a great team.

JASON T. DECKER
Phoenix, AZ

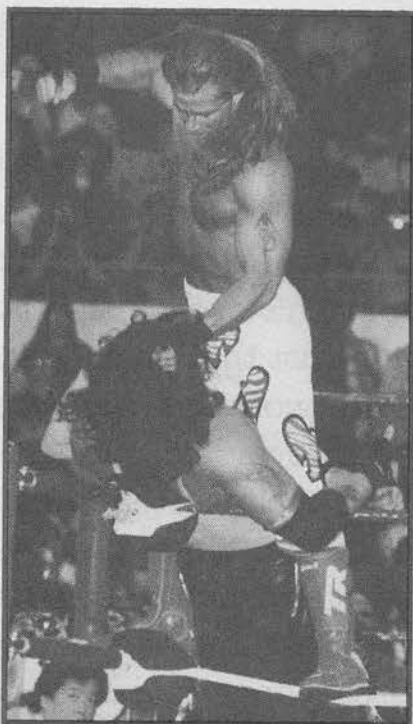
DOES NOT COMPUTE!

I think it's time for INSIDE WRESTLING to upgrade its computers, because only a computer with a memory glitch would pick Kevin Nash to defeat Shawn Michaels in a tournament ("INSIDE WRESTLING Computer Tournament '97," April 1997). Shawn is a superior wrestler to Nash, and your computer should have picked up on that, or didn't anyone feed in any information about the past year or so?

Nash may be a great power wrestler, but Shawn could fly rings around his plodding former flunky. The only time Nash moves fast in the ring is when he is tripping over his own feet. I think Shawn would easily dominate Nash if they had a

match today. I think the only other good thing Nash's size could be used for would be as a human back-drop for the greatest wrestler in the world.

DEANNA OAKLEY
St. Louis, MO
(Continued on page 52)



Shawn Michaels lost to Kevin "Diesel" Nash at WrestleMania XI, but bested him in a series of bouts last spring. Reader Deanna Oakley was surprised that our computer picked Hall to beat Michaels in a seven-match series.

Inside Wrestling

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REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

By Stu Saks

I don't know what game Sting's playing. He's a smart guy and there must (in his mind at least) be a logical explanation for his behavior of the last few months. Surely, a simple and honest mistake by his friends would not have this kind of an impact on his psyche. There's something else going on inside that black and white head of his.

I don't really have the desire to play Dr. Basil and try to analyze him. My main concern is with Sting as an athlete. How well will he be able to perform physically when (and if) he ever returns to active duty?

Knowing Sting as I do, I don't doubt that he has maintained his grueling training regimen. He'll lift his weights, do his road work, eat the right foods, and get his sleep. The time off (five months at this writing) might have also allowed a lot of the nagging injuries that all wrestlers must endure to heal. But there's a big difference between being of sound body and being in wrestling shape. All the training in the world doesn't prepare your body to absorb the punishing blows of a 300-pound opponent.

In his favor, Sting was able to come back after being sidelined five months with a ruptured patella tendon to win the NWA World title from Ric Flair with only one tuneup match. But that was seven years ago. Sting is still a young man by this sport's standards, but it's unlikely he could rid himself of the ring rust that quickly again.

If he has a plan to slowly work his way back into top-level action, he'd better re-evaluate. Whatever side Sting eventually emerges on, there are going to be hard feelings that, in this sport, are usually expressed in very violent terms. When he does return, the change in Sting's life from lurking mystery man to being a key man in the WCW-NWO war is going to be very fast and very intense. I like Sting (in spite of the 50 or so unanswered phone messages) and honestly wish him well. I sure hope he knows what he's doing. Because if he doesn't, he might have to recuperate from more than a ruptured patella tendon.

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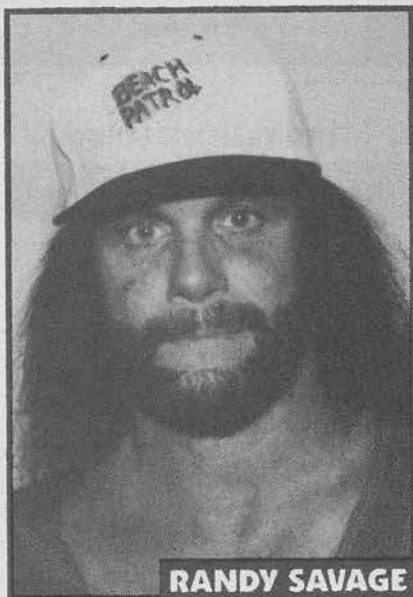
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NAMES MA

HULK HOGAN IS trying to convince us now that **Randy Savage's** decision to join the NWO at SuperBrawl VII in February was all part of a plan hatched back in July of last year, when Hogan, **Scott Hall**, and **Kevin Nash** attacked Savage and formed the organization.

"Glad to have 'Macho' back on my side," Hogan told me. "Finally, we can be seen together in public. See, Randy and I had this idea, brother Bill. The 'Macho Man' and 'Hollywood' fooled the world. Did you see the look on the faces of all the little kids in the arena when he revealed he was with us? They were crying their eyes out. Another one of their heroes disappointed them. Man, it was the best thing me and 'Macho' ever planned. NWO for life, brother. Hey, the NWO is life!"



RANDY SAVAGE

I don't believe that for a second. The way I see it, Savage and Hogan have some sort of "fatal attraction" to each other, and Randy just wanted to be part of Hulk's life again. But history shows us they can never

stay together long, so we should see them split up again sometime soon. That's good news for anyone who wants to see the NWO crumble.

I had the opportunity to speak with **Shawn Michaels** regarding his decision to vacate the WWF World title, and he was eager to talk about his fans.



SHAWN MICHAELS

"The one thing about this whole situation that's really tough to take," he said, "is that I know there are some people out there who think I turned my back on them. What I did hurt a lot of my fans, and I realize that. But the people who supported me all along have to know that if I didn't get out right then and there, I could have hurt my knee further and then never been able to wrestle again.

"I've heard all the talk where people wonder why didn't I wait until after WrestleMania to do this. The reason is I might not have gotten to WrestleMania if I didn't stop wrestling, and that's the cold, hard truth. When I return, I just hope those fans will come back. I know

my true fans will."

Doug Gilbert has returned to the USWA after a lengthy absence and has made his intentions there clear. "I won't let the **Nation of Domination** survive here," he said. Gilbert is focusing on **J.C. Ice** and **Wolfie D**, who have been handing out NOD recruitment forms in USWA dressing rooms.

Viper has beaten **Glen Osbourne** for the East Coast Wrestling Association heavyweight title ... **Tracey Smothers** has signed for several matches in ECW ... Mexico's WWA title is now around the waist of **El Hijo del Santo** following his spectacular victory over **Rey Misterio Jr.**

Johnny Glitter and his girlfriend, **Flavor**, have put together a stable of wrestlers called **The Glitter Alliance**, but the Alliance is running into major trouble now. Due to illness, **Flavor** couldn't attend one card featuring several members of the Alliance. While managing **The Lumberjacks**, Glitter spotted a beautiful, buxom blonde in the crowd. He flirted with her all



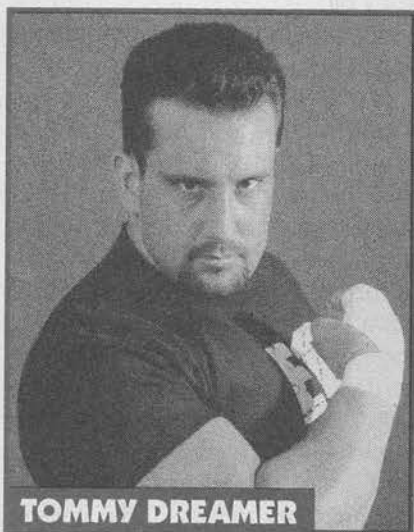
DANIELLE

KIN' NEWS

By Bill Apter

evening and went out with her after the matches. Things went very well, and the blonde, an attorney named **Danielle**, was hired by Glitter as the head of his legal team. Danielle also accompanied Glitter and The Lumberjacks to the ring the following night, something only Flavor used to do. I see a major feud in the works!

Tommy Dreamer wants to thank all the ECW fans who showed up at the Manhattan Center the first time ECW wrestlers were showcased on *Raw*. "The



TOMMY DREAMER

WWF never saw talent like us," he said, "and they never saw fans like that, either. Our fans are the best. ECW made the WWF guys look like the wimps they really are, and we did it on their show. One on one, we'd win every match against any of their guys because we're tougher and hungrier."

Brian Danzig will get another shot at AIWF U.S. champion **Major Breakinridge** soon, but he's asking federation officials to bar **Major Havoc** and **The Unknown Soldier** from the building when he does. In each of Brian's last three attempts

at the belt, Havoc and Soldier have interfered on behalf of Breakinridge just as Danzig was ready to pin him ... No man has been able to pin PWF junior heavyweight champion **Madd Maxxine** during the last year, but **Texas Outlaw** was able to get a victory over her recently. He and Maxxine were fighting outside the ring when Maxxine smelled the hot dogs at the concession stand. She promptly forgot about the match and went for the food. She got counted out. Due to a lack of title defenses, IWA U.S. champion **Dale "The Cannon" Porter** has been stripped of the title. A tournament will be held to determine a new champion ... Veteran **Nelson Royal** is thinking about returning to the ring at an upcoming ICW card to renew a feud he had with **Marc Ash** in 1991 ... Independent manager **The Master** reports that he has been starring in

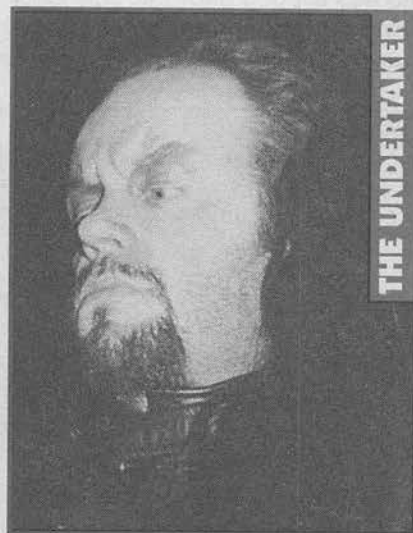


THE MASTER

horror films in Hong Kong. "My ugliness has finally paid off—I'm getting paid a fortune," said the man who admits he sometimes gets scared when he sees his own face in the mirror. "However, the big news is that I've met a monster of a man

who I am training to become a wrestler. By August, this man will be ready to unleash 400 pounds of violent fury upon American wrestlers like **Cheetah Master**, **Boogie Woogie Brown**, and **Billy Kidman**—all the men who made my life miserable in the ECWA. They'll all pay now ... yes, they'll all pay!"

Gorgeous George III has been stripped of the SCW heavyweight title after going 90 days without defending the belt ... North American All-Star



THE UNDERTAKER

Wrestling champion **The Colorado Kid** is feuding with **Tommy Rich**. Rich is maintaining a busy schedule, traveling between NAASW in Tennessee and ECW in Philadelphia, where he manages **Little Guido** ... **The Undertaker** granted me a few moments for an interview regarding his new look. "I am reincarnated," he said. "The Undertaker became the ashes and then rose to a new beginning that has only seen the light for a brief moment."

Well, I guess that explains the new outfit and why his face has a different look to it. Huh?

That's all for now. I'll see you at the matches!

IF YOU'RE A wrestling fan—and I assume you are, because you're reading this magazine—there would have been worse places to spend the middle of February than in Tennessee. That's right, Tennessee, the state that used to bring us Smoky Mountain Wrestling and the USWA, but now brings us the USWA. It's a place where the fans are a little more hardcore than anywhere else, and my tour of the state proved that's still the case.

Stop one: a chance to watch The Colorado Kid on a North American All-Star Wrestling card at the National Guard Armory in Nashville, right smack in the heart of the state. You probably recall that last November, the young and unheralded Kid stunned Jerry Lawler for the USWA heavyweight title, prompting Lawler to take a month-long vow of silence (well, at least he wouldn't talk to me). Lawler eventually regained the belt, while Kid has slipped back into obscurity. But he was solid here tonight, pinning veteran Tracey Smothers before Smothers initiated a postmatch brawl. The

ON THE ROAD

With Dave Lenker

Colorado Kid has certainly brought out the worst in a lot of opponents.

Stop two: The choices on Friday were a Tennessee Mountain Wrestling card at the Parks and Recreation Building in Johnson City or a Southern States Wrestling card in Fall Branch. They're right down the road from each other—Johnson City is off I-181, Fall Branch a smaller town off I-81—so it was a matter of which federation had the more attractive card. TMW featured Tony Anthony and "Dirty White Girl" Kimberly against Terry and Buddy Landell in a mixed

tag team match. Southern States had Rick Morton. Easy choice: I went to Johnson City.

And it turned out to be a good choice, too, because Kimberly pulled off one of the most surprising results of recent years: She pinned Terry Landell to earn the victory for her team. The crowd was shocked, but not altogether disappointed, because matches like these don't happen all the time. Maybe Kimberly has a future as a wrestler, and not just as "Dirty White Boy's" dirty girl.

"I've been saying all along that she has the talent," Anthony crowed. "Nobody believed me."

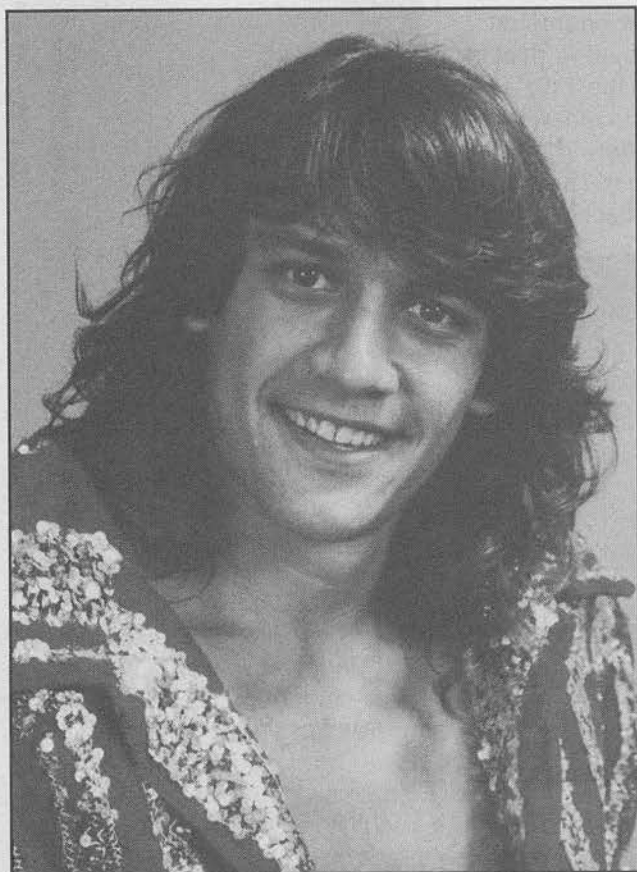
Anthony, who a few years ago disavowed his Southern heritage and claimed to be of Yankee descent, has become a cult hero in eastern Tennessee, the former home of SMW. Anthony has turned out to be as loyal to the South and his native state as any wrestler in the sport, and the fans appreciate his presence. They know he's good enough to be making a living elsewhere, but he only competes as T.L. Hopper in the WWF occasionally.

Stop three: Saturday, across Route 11E, then south on I-81 to Morristown for a Tennessee Mountain Wrestling card at the Talley Ward Building. Mike Powers vs. Night Train, The Hillbillies vs. Eddie and Steve Cairo, Johnny Raynor vs. Jody Rivers, and Jeff Anderson vs. Danny Little Bear. Not much going on until heavyweight champion Buddy Landell battled Paul Ray in the main event. When I spoke to Landell before the match, he was still angry over the loss to the "Dirty Whites" a night earlier, and dead-set on making sure he didn't waste his entire weekend. He didn't, beating Ray easily.

"Gotta get something outta this," Landell said afterward. "What happened last night just burns me the wrong way. Unbelievable."

After a good night's sleep, I set out the following morning for the drive down I-75 to the Georgia border. Chattanooga was the site of the WWF's In Your House pay-per-view event at the UTC Arena, and it's safe to say that the atmosphere was completely dif-

(Continued on page 54)



The Colorado Kid has a way of stirring up trouble in Tennessee. Last year, he had Jerry Lawler fuming when he upset him for the USWA belt. More recently, he got Tracey Smothers all riled up.

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Behind the Dressing Room Door

by David Rosenbaum

IN THIS AGE in which everybody seems to videotape everything that happens, significant or otherwise, you have to start wondering: At what point does the videotape overlap real life? When have we taped so much stuff that we start to tape ourselves taping stuff? And is videotape altering real life? Which things would and

wouldn't happen if there wasn't a camera pointed in their direction?

I wondered about this while watching Scott Hall, Kevin Nash, and Six running the Steiners off the road and into an embankment somewhere in Florida in February. No, I wasn't there to see it firsthand, but of course, the incident was caught on tape—it seems the only major event of the past decade that wasn't caught on tape was the murder of Ron Goldman and Nicole Brown Simpson—and we all got to watch it on our 25-inch color TVs.

Oh, isn't technology wonderful?

But you have to wonder why Hall, Nash, and Six weren't arrested for their caught-on-tape actions? And how arrogant—or foolish—were the NWO members to film such a heinous incident, then let it be shown on national TV.

Somewhere out there, there must be a lawyer or two ready to recommend to Rick and Scott Steiner that they sue the NWO.

There's another strange thing

happening here. Scary, too. Wrestling has crossed over into real life. Ring feuds are being taken way too far. Something is seriously wrong when you have wrestlers running other wrestlers off the road and trying to hurt them, just like something is seriously wrong when you have a wrestler (say, Brian Pillman) pulling a gun on another wrestler (say, Steve Austin), and we all get to watch it *live* on *Monday Night Raw*.

For those of you who missed the Steiners incident, it'll probably be available on videotape for \$24.95 or so soon.

But seriously ... the car being driven by Rick and Scott flipped over once, injuring both Rick and Scott. Fortunately, their injuries were not serious. Yet how did the NWO members know when they carried out this heinous act that they weren't going to kill the Steiners? You can't tell me they were following Rick and Scott just for the fun of it and weren't planning to do something bad to them.

Bottom line: The NWO has gone too far. Way too far.

So have professional wrestling and videotape.

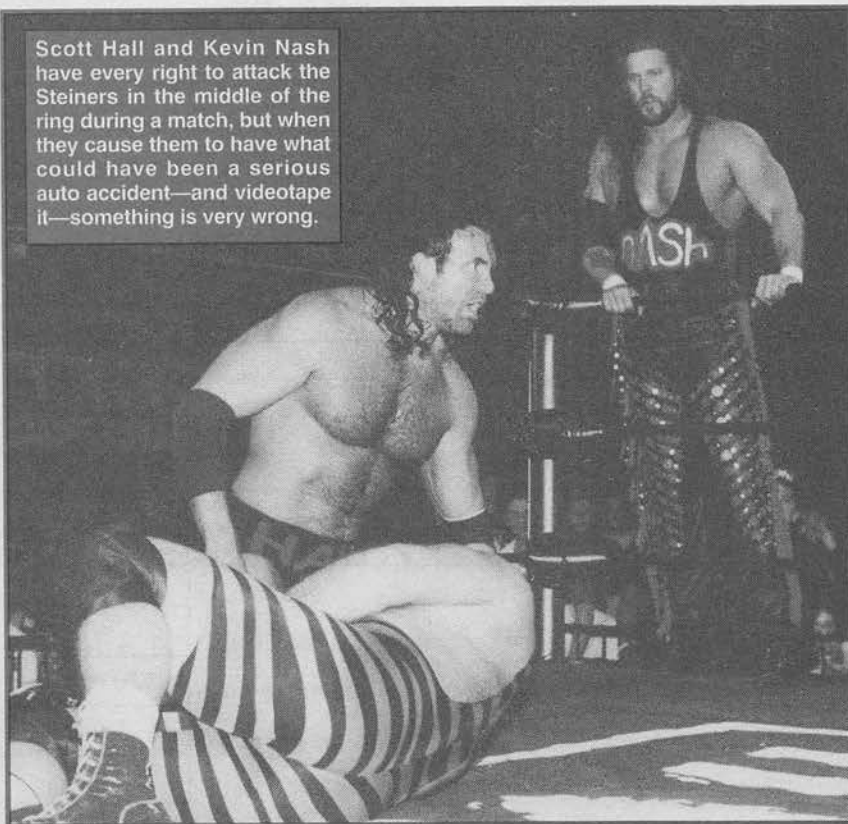
It almost seems as if WCW condones any action by its wrestlers, as long as it's caught on videotape, so viewers can watch it (and ratings can rise). It's a dangerous precedent that could end with the entire federation being sued for millions and millions of dollars. No insurance policy in the world would protect WCW or the NWO from such a lawsuit. They'd be hung out to dry.

The only way for WCW to stop these things from happening is to refuse to show the incidents on TV and severely punish the perpetrators. This is more than a feud we're talking about. It's life and death.

You know, nothing would thrill me more than to see the NWO go

(Continued on page 56)

Scott Hall and Kevin Nash have every right to attack the Steiners in the middle of the ring during a match, but when they cause them to have what could have been a serious auto accident—and videotape it—something is very wrong.



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the Insider

by Brandi Mankiewicz

(The opinions expressed in "The Insider" are those of Brandi Mankiewicz alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of anyone else on the staff of this magazine.)

WHILE MY COLLEAGUES trip over themselves while writing their tear-soaked tributes to former WWF World heavyweight champion Shawn Michaels, I have been giving a great deal of thought to this matter. While I may dabble on wrestling's dark side, and make it a habit to skewer certain fan favorites in this and other columns, I do not revel in kicking

people when they're down.

Except when it comes to Shawn Michaels.

Let's face it, I am not a Shawn Michaels fan. I never will be one. He represents everything that I despise in wrestling and, because of that, I have come to despise him. To be honest, after listening to his sad soliloquy on *Thursday Raw Thursday* on February 13, I started to despise him even more.

I thought the Emmett Kelly-like Sting was the undisputed World heavyweight whining champion, but "The Heartbreak Kid" defeated him for that crown when he announced his self-

imposed exile due to a supposed injury. As tears streamed down his face, he told Vince McMahon and everyone else that if he couldn't perform at 100 percent, he couldn't perform at all.

Very noble, but I'm not buying into this.

Hey, Shawn, every wrestler gets injured, and a few suffer career-ending injuries. The difference between them and you is that you don't *know* if your career is over yet. By rushing to make this speech and dropping out of the WWF, you have proved that I am right. You are a glory-hound who will stop at nothing to get a little (or a lot of) attention.

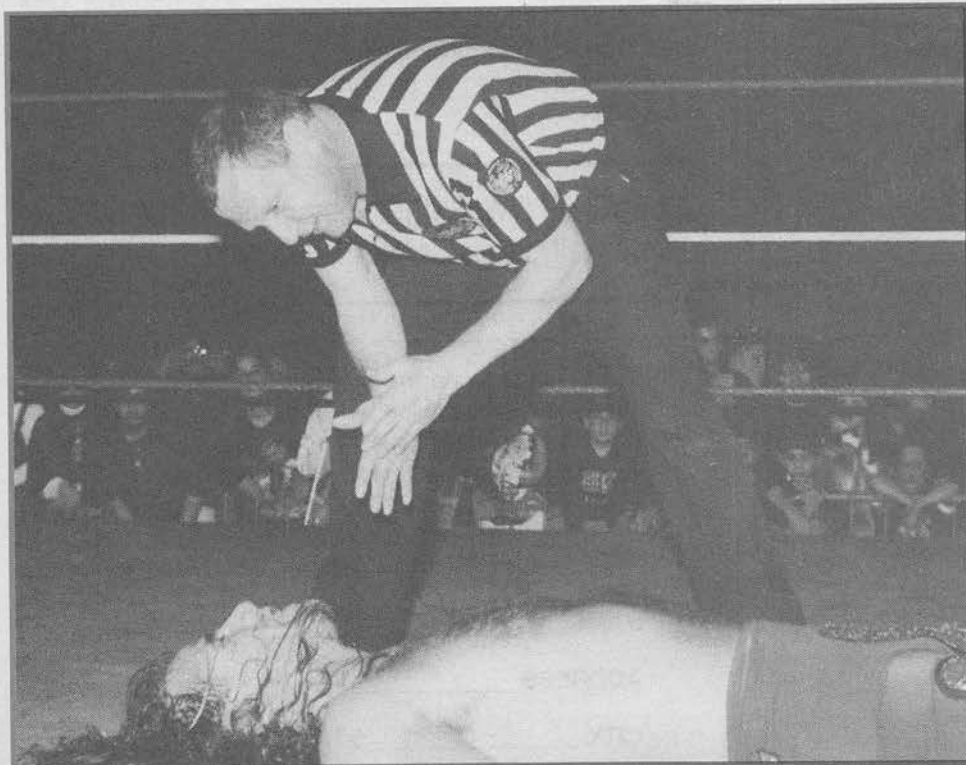
Maybe Michaels did a little research on Sting's career before making the speech. Seven years ago, the "Stinger" faced a similar dilemma. He injured his patella tendon and was forced to the sidelines for almost one year. In fact, many figured he'd never return. But Sting did not shed any tears with a faux farewell speech.

He stuck around and kept his toe in the waters of WCW. That's something Shawn is mysteriously unwilling to do.

Before hearing any physician's final verdicts, Michaels tucked his tail between his dancing legs and vanished from the WWF. He didn't say he wanted to remain on as a broadcaster or a manager. The WWF didn't even consider resurrecting the horrid "Heartbreak Hotel" interview segments that once made me long for Brother Love.

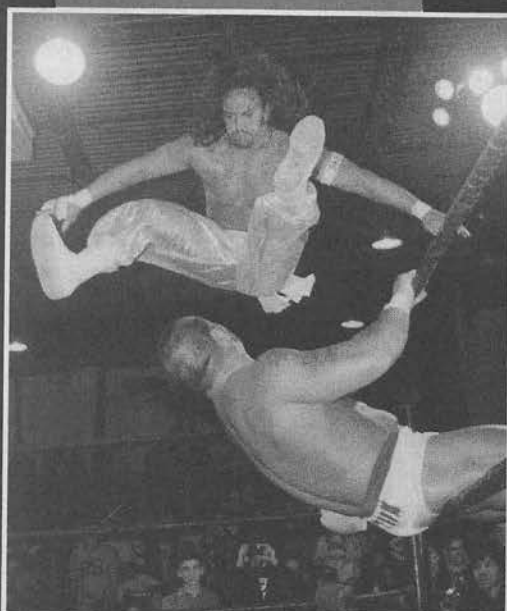
Many are speculating that he knew all along that his knee wasn't that badly injured. But even Paul Harvey may not be able to find the rest of this story.

(Continued on page 58)



I only wish I could have been in the ring at this particular moment. I literally could have kicked Shawn Michaels while he was down. Maybe I'll get my chance someday.

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ON Assignment

By Liz Hunter

WHEN I ARRIVED at the Nashville Arena, my assignment was clear: I was to interview—yet again—Jerry Lawler. “The King” has received his share of ink in this and other magazines. Too much, probably. Frankly, I didn’t think he’d give me many original juicy quotes about Bret Hart’s fourth WWF World title victory, but, hey, that’s what my

editors asked for, so that’s what they were going to get.

After all, what *else* could I talk to him about? Yet another USWA title win? Yet another USWA title loss? What he thought of the fans in Memphis this week?

I arrived late at the arena, after the *Monday Night Raw* cameras had started rolling. The events of the evening seemed to be focused

around Bret Hart, “Psycho” Sid, and Steve Austin. Then, in the midst of all that chaos, Lawler asked for a couple of minutes to speak his peace.

I was milling about in a back room, watching the broadcast on a monitor, when Lawler made his odd request. No one was paying close attention, including me. I, along with others, thought it would just be another diatribe against Bret Hart.

But when Lawler uttered three little letters, everyone stopped and became transfixed with his image on the monitor. Lawler uttered the letters E-C-W.

As we and the rest of the country looked on, Lawler snatched a nearby sign from an “extreme” fan. Across the makeshift banner were those same three letters. Lawler was incensed. He began to criticize the Philadelphia-based promotion, calling the wrestlers “has-beens” and “misfits.”

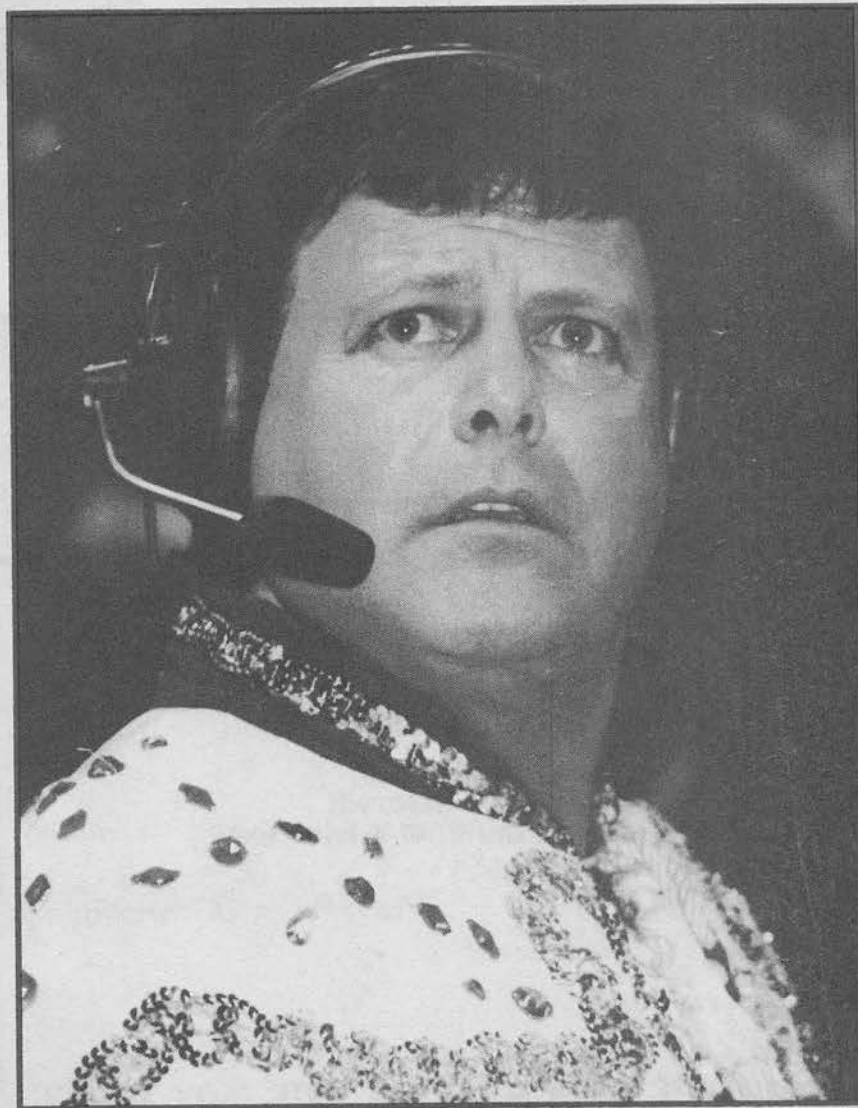
But he didn’t stop there.

Lawler came right out and challenged the wrestlers of ECW to show up the following week on a live *Raw* in New York City. “The King” wanted to confront them face-to-face. ECW’s Paul E. Dangerously called in and picked up the gauntlet that had been thrown down. War had been declared.

The taping ended with the focus on new WWF champion “Psycho” Sid. But my job was to talk to Lawler, and this time, I was anxious to gather his viewpoint on his latest controversy.

“Ah, Hunter, I thought you’d be seeking me out,” Lawler said when he noticed me following him down a corridor. “Now what, pray tell,

(Continued on page 59)



Jerry Lawler loves to make comments that stir up controversy when he’s working as a broadcaster on *Monday Night Raw*. But what he said about ECW in February came as a shock to a lot of people.

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JUNE 1995

APRIL 1996

JULY 1995 INSIDE WRESTLING is a power-packed 88-pager (including four color pinups) that included our popular "Wrestling Cool" section. Who's the coolest dude, babe, crippler, and daredevil? One thing all our readers agreed on: This issue was cool!

OCTOBER 1995 INSIDE WRESTLING reports on the state of affairs of World Championship Wrestling for the first half of 1995 in "WCW Midyear Report." We tell you how the stars fared among the turmoil in this special 88-page edition that includes four full-color pinups.

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APRIL 1996 INSIDE WRESTLING presents the third edition of the Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament, and the results just get more startling each year! The highlight of this annual 88-page special, as our readers have told us, is the computer-generated centerfold action shot from the tournament final.

JULY 1996 INSIDE WRESTLING takes you away from the wrestling ring and into the personal lives of wrestling's hottest stars. What makes Sunny cry? What's Sabu's favorite TV show? What's the dumbest thing Shawn Michaels has ever done? What scares Jim Cornette? What brings Sting down? This 88-page includes color shots of Sting, Sunny, Sabu, and Michaels.

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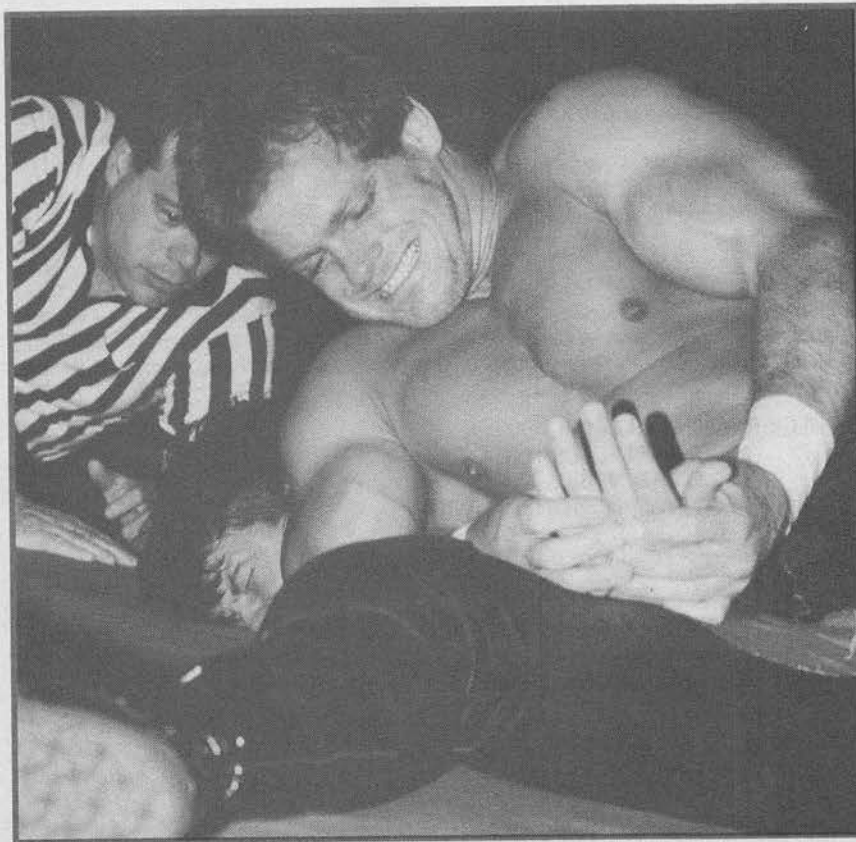
INSIDE WRESTLING CAPSULE PROFILE 254

CHRIS BENOIT

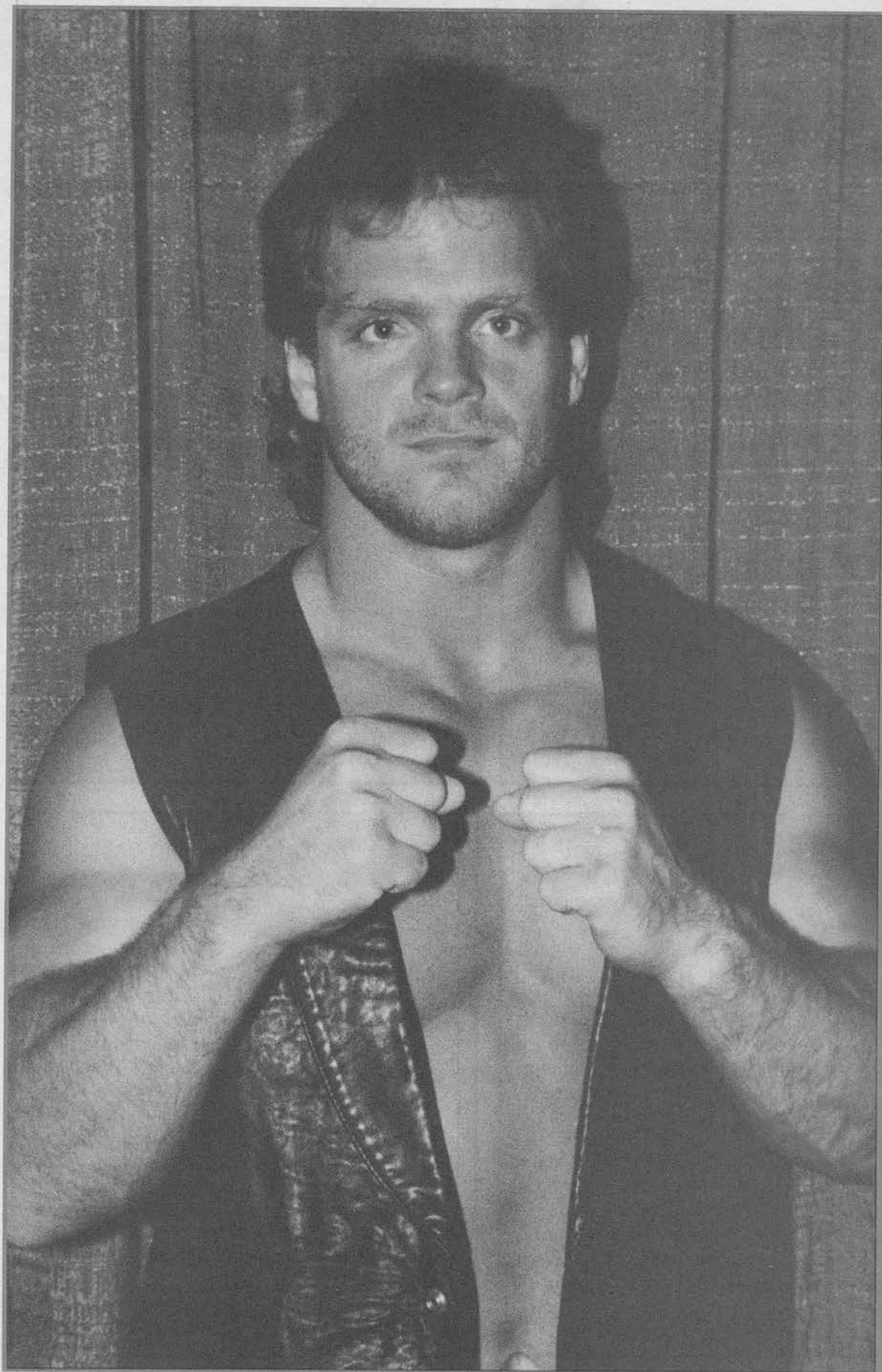
IS THERE ANY stranger feud going on in wrestling today than the one involving Chris Benoit, Woman, Kevin Sullivan, and now Miss Jacqueline? Benoit and Woman have gotten very close (to say the least), and that doesn't sit well with Sullivan, who has brought his old friend Jacqueline into the picture (*"Woman is class all the way; Jacqueline is anything but"*) ... Benoit, a 5'10", 218-pound native of Vancouver, British Columbia, didn't have much of a killer instinct early in his career, but it didn't take him long to show that he was a terrific athlete ... Was trained by Stu Hart ... Made

his pro debut in 1986 and wrestled mostly in Calgary and for New Japan early in his career ... Took a run at the Stampede North American title while battling the likes of Johnathan Holliday, Skull Mason, Angel of Death, and The Blackharts ... Won his first big title when, competing under a mask as Pegasus Kid, he knocked off Jushin Liger for the IWGP junior heavyweight title in August 1990 (*"You can't beat Liger without being at your absolute best"*) ... Later lost the title and a mask vs. mask match to Liger ... Joined WCW in 1993, and lost to 2 Cold Scorpio in his first big pay-per-view match, at SuperBrawl III (*"I was just happy to be there"*) ... Partnership with Bobby Eaton didn't work, as

they lost to The Nasty Boys and other top duos (*"We never had the right chemistry"*) ... Won two prestigious junior heavyweight tournaments in Japan in 1994, besting the likes of El Samurai and The Great Sasuke ... Signed with ECW in '94 and took on the nickname "Canadian Crippler" after he broke several of Sabu's vertebrae in a match (*"He thinks of me every time he turns his head"*) ... Teamed with Dean Malenko to beat Sabu and Taz for the ECW tag title in February 1995; they held the belts for less than three months ... That spring, he surprised everyone by showing up at a WWF TV taping with Ted DiBiase, but he never signed with the federation (*"Smart decision"*) ... Was introduced as a member of The Four Horsemen in November 1995, joining Arn Anderson, Ric Flair, and Brian Pillman (*"Another great career move"*) ... Actually suggested Woman be booted out of the Horsemen one night when she refused to allow Debra McMichael and Elizabeth to hand new Horseman Steve McMichael his steel briefcase during a match (*"Before I got to know her better"*) ... Lost to Shinjiro Otani in the finals of the WCW cruiserweight title tourney last May ... Beat Kevin Sullivan in a falls-count-anywhere match at last year's Great American Bash; part of the match was contested in a men's restroom (*"I shoulda flushed him down a toilet"*) ... He and Woman began taunting Sullivan in later months by showing videos of them dining together in Germany ... Benoit and Sullivan have had many wild battles since ... With the Horsemen behind him, Benoit figures to improve even more; few would be surprised to see him capture a title in WCW in the near future (*"They'd be surprised if I didn't"*). □



Chris Benoit puts some extra pressure on Eddy Guerrero's wrist as he wrenches his arm behind his back. Benoit is one of the most technically skilled wrestlers in WCW, and he knows how to play mind games, too.



CHRIS BENOIT

Where Are They NOW

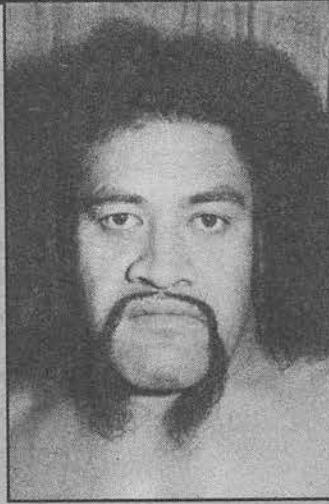
Do you have a favorite wrestler who has left your area? Are you wondering where he is today? Then this special column is just for you. Each month we will update the whereabouts of four current or former wrestlers



S.D. JONES

Although he wrestles only occasionally these days (for several East Coast independent organizations), Jones is a very busy man. That's because he now owns several chicken and rib restaurants in the Bronx. "It's a full-time business that just doesn't give

me much time to wrestle," S.D. told us, "but one of the best things about it is lots of my fans come in and recognize me. I get to talk about wrestling with people all the time, and I really love that."



SIKA

One-half of the former WWF tag team champs The Wild Samoans, Sika now lives in San Francisco, where he runs a security firm. "We do bodyguard work for lots of celebrities," he said, "and we do some work at exclusive nightclubs."

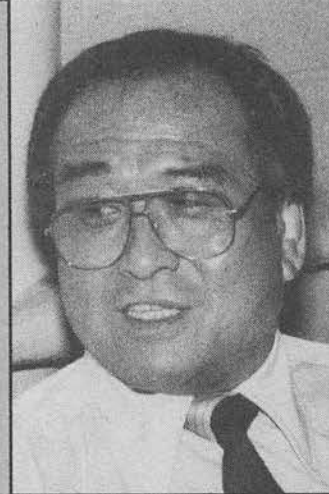
Sika also helps his son, Matthew, who's part of The Samoan Gangsta Party, develop his wrestling skills. "My brother Afa trains him at his school in Pennsylvania," Sika said. "Matthew flies out a few times a year for strategy planning."



DICK SLATER

At press time, Slater was still recovering from back surgery he had in late-February. "But I'm feeling pretty good now, and I'll be back," he said confidently, "maybe by the time this magazine comes out." Slater was diagnosed with a herniated disk a few days after wrestling on a

WCW card in Gainesville, Georgia, in November 1996. He had hoped physical therapy would solve the problem, but doctors finally convinced him that surgery was the best option.



HIRO MATSUDA

Matsuda was a wrestler, talent scout, trainer, and manager during his years in the sport, but he is now retired. Some of the men he prepared for their pro careers are Hulk Hogan, Lex Luger, and Ron "Faarooq" Simmons. "The sport has changed

so much, with all this pay-per-view, and fireworks, and very violent matches," he says. Today, Matsuda, who is 59 years old, lives in Tampa with his wife, Judy. His daily routine includes jogging and working out at a local gym.

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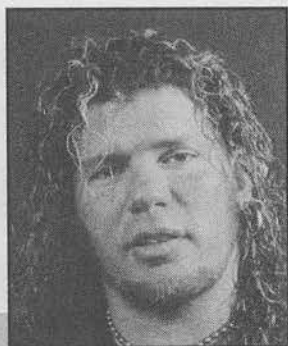
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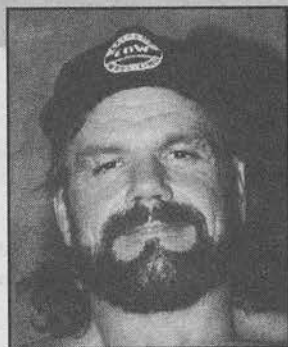
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NEWS FROM THE

PHILADELPHIA, PA
BY CARL ANTONIO



**RAVEN
VS.
STEVE WILLIAMS**



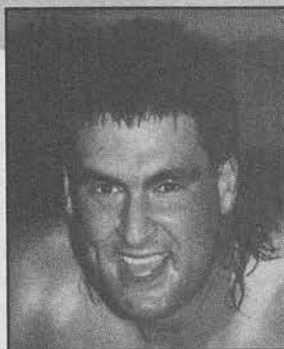
ECW champ Raven pulled off a stunning upset after challenging "Dr. Death" to an impromptu title match. Williams bled early after getting smashed with a chair. As Raven dove off a turnbuckle, though, Williams moved, allowing Raven to crash through a table. He then nailed Raven with a chair until he bled. Later, Lori and Tyler Fullington came out with the Blue World Order. Stevie Richards handed Williams a BWO T-shirt, but Williams refused it and was superkicked three times for doing so. A dazed Raven was then able to cover him and pin him.

OTHER BOUTS: Louie Spicolli pinned Mike Awesome ... Lance Storm beat B. Mahoney ... Stevie Richards defeated Rick Morton ... Steve Williams beat Axl Rotten ... The Sandman defeated D-Von Dudley ... ECW tag team champs The Eliminators defeated Sabu & Rob Van Dam ... Terry Funk pinned Tommy Rich ... Tommy Dreamer & The Pit Bulls beat Shane Douglas, Brian Lee, & Chris Candido.

NEW YORK, NY
BY BRAD ROBBINS



**ROCKY MAIVIA
VS.
SALVATORE SINCERE**



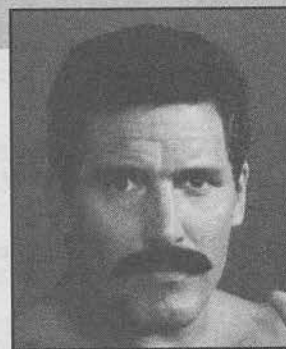
Maivia pinned Sincere in a fast-paced match that saw Maivia keep the advantage almost the entire match. The Madison Square Garden fans were clearly behind this young sensation as he nailed Sincere with a series of hard punches to the face that left Sincere reeling. Sincere attempted to gain some momentum by executing a sideslam, but Maivia rallied as the crowd chanted his name. He got the quick three-count after executing a shoulderbreaker.

OTHER BOUTS: Henry & Phineas Godwinn beat Owen Hart & Bob Holly ... Steve Austin pinned Goldust ... Hunter Hearst Helmsley pinned Jake Roberts after Curtis interfered ... Shawn Michaels pinned Mankind ... Bret Hart defeated Big Van Vader by disqualification ... Faarooq & Crush defeated Ahmed Johnson & Savio Vega after Savio turned against Johnson ... "Psycho" Sid Vicious beat The Undertaker by countout when Big Van Vader interfered.

YARDVILLE, NJ
BY TOM LLOYD



**DORY FUNK JR.
VS.
DAN SEVERN**



It has been a long time since Dory Funk Jr. held the NWA heavyweight title—24 years to be exact—but he nearly beat current NWA champ Severn in this bout. The match was a classic: Both men used an array of scientific moves. Both also tried several times to make the other submit, but neither would give up. The continuous action was only ended by the sound of the bell, which rang after 30 minutes of action. The bout was declared a draw.

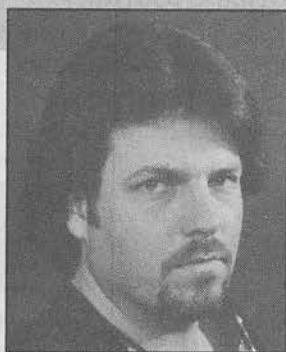
OTHER BOUTS: Bobby G defeated Billy Real ... The Overweight Lover defeated Magic ... Julio Sanchez & Don Montoya defeated Downward Spiral (with Madonna Wayne Gacy)... Bobby Blake pinned Jarred Dylan ... NWA U.S. tag team champions The Lost Boys beat The New Bad Attitude (formerly The Misfits) ... The Inferno Kid pinned Ralph Soto ... Donnie B. defeated Rik Ratchett ... NWA North American champion Reckless Youth pinned Jason Knight.

WRESTLING CAPITALS

WILMINGTON, DE
BY MARIANNE DUNN



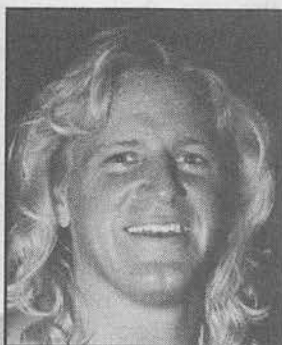
**GOLDUST
VS.
LANCE DIAMOND**



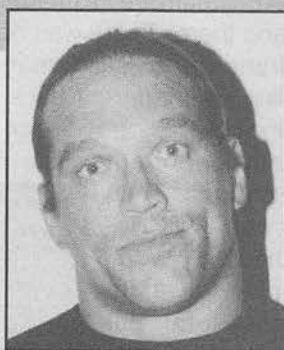
Goldust felt compelled to take on Diamond on this ECWA card since he had heard Diamond was spreading nasty rumors about Marlena. Diamond attacked at the bell, but Goldust leveled him with two clotheslines. Although Diamond retaliated later with several suplexes and a DDT, Marlena slowed him down by climbing onto the apron and blowing cigar smoke in his face. As 'Dust whipped Diamond into the referee in the corner, then nailed him with a "curtain call," Ace Darling tried to interfere, but was stopped by Cheetah Master. As those two fought, Goldust rolled up Diamond.

OTHER BOUTS: Billy Kidman wrestled Reckless Youth to a draw ... (ECWA) Animal & Commando beat Cowboy Johnny Blaze & Mike Mayhem ... Ronnie Roberts beat Warhawk ... Ace Darling beat Cheetah Master ... Inferno Kid beat Mr. Ooh La La in a crybaby match ... Boogie Woogie Brown pinned The Chicago Hitman ... Pat Shamrock beat El Sensational ... Glen Osbourne beat Viper.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA
BY FRED SHERNOFF



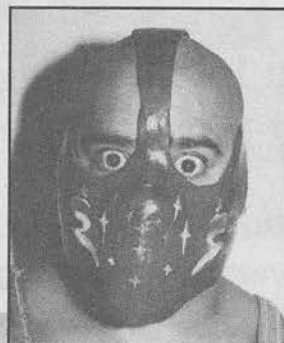
**JEFF JARRETT
VS.
STEVE MCMICHAEL**



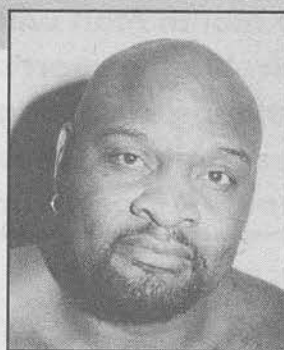
Jarrett had to win this SuperBrawl VII match to be granted membership in the Horsemen, and he did win ... in Horseman style. McMichael was surprisingly effective, though, matching Jarrett hold for hold. At one point, Debra McMichael began arguing with her husband, who wanted her to hand him his metal briefcase. Finally, she turned her back and threw the steel briefcase into the ring. Jarrett got it, nailed McMichael with it, and got the pinfall victory.

OTHER BOUTS: Six beat WCW cruiserweight champ Dean Malenko to win the title ... WCW TV champ Prince Laukea defeated Rey Misterio Jr. ... Dallas Page beat Marcus Bagwell by disqualification ... WCW U.S. champ Eddy Guerrero pinned Chris Jericho ... Public Enemy beat Harlem Heat and The Barbarian & Meng in a triangle match ... Chris Benoit pinned Kevin Sullivan in a San Francisco death match ... WCW World champ Hulk Hogan pinned Roddy Piper.

PITTSBURGH, PA
BY CINDY LENHART



**THE SULTAN
VS.
AHMED JOHNSON**



The Sultan was a last-minute replacement for Big Van Vader, and that surprise element, combined with outside interference from the Nation of Domination, helped him defeat Ahmed Johnson at the Civic Arena. The crowd was clearly behind Ahmed throughout the match, and he responded by pounding on The Sultan. The Nation of Domination came to ringside, distracting Ahmed long enough for The Sultan to get Ahmed into the camel clutch and gain a submission victory.

OTHER BOUTS: Rocky Maivia defeated Leif Cassidy ... Crush beat Barry Horowitz ... Hunter Hearst Helmsley pinned Flash Funk ... World tag team champions Owen Hart & Davey Boy Smith defeated Bob Holly (substituting for Doug Furnas) & Phil Lafon ... Faarooq defeated The Undertaker by disqualification ... Goldust pinned Mankind ... Bret Hart & "Psycho" Sid Vicious beat Shawn Michaels & Steve Austin.



Matt Brock's **Plain** *Speaking*

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

One of these days, the history writers are going to get around to writing a history of the WWF World title—Saks tells me we did it already, in *Wrestle America*—and when they do, they might just decide that Bret Hart is the greatest champion of all-time. This scribe isn't one to deal with superlatives, but let's face it:

Hart has won the title under every possible circumstance, and he has defended it, too. Take Bruno Sammartino. Great champion. Nothing against Bruno, who beat all the great wrestlers of his day, but where was he wrestling? Madison Square Garden, Boston Garden, Baltimore, Philadelphia, here and there. There was nobody like Bruno for 15 solid years, but wrestling was different back then. Fewer cities, less travel, not quite as many opponents. The rigors were different. Then there was Hulk Hogan, the WWF World champion for about six years total, but even his biggest supporters can't deny that Hogan wasn't exactly a busy man. Defended the belt maybe once a week during busy times, and usually even less. Good champion, beat everybody, including the men the experts said he couldn't beat, and now he's on top again in WCW. But take these two men and stack them up against Hart. He became a four-time World champion when he beat Steve

CHATTANOOGA, TN

Austin, Big Van Vader, and The Undertaker in a four-man elimination match for the vacant title, and he did it in what used to be a wrestling outpost: Chattanooga. Pardon me, boys, but wasn't there once a song about this town? Something about a train? The other three times he won the belt in Saskatchewan, New York City, and Maryland, and he has beaten them all: Ric Flair, considered by many to be the greatest wrestler of all-time, Yokozuna, one of the heaviest wrestlers of all-time, and Kevin "Diesel" Nash, who had been champion for nearly a year. Forget that Hart's fourth title reign lasted about as long as it takes to blink; he won it, hands down. Let's see what "Psycho" Sid can do for an encore.

The name is Prince Iaukea. That's I-A-U-K-E-A, and if you've never heard of him before, then get in line. Right behind Lord Steven Regal would be a good place to start. He'd never heard of him, either, took him too lightly,



BRET HART

then turned his back on laukea and paid the price with his WCW TV title. Pretty shameful loss no matter how you approach it, no matter how it happened. Regal had laukea down on the mat when Rey Misterio Jr. came out to taunt Regal regarding an upcoming match. Regal turns his back, and it's lights out. laukea was down, but he wasn't out, and he simply rolled up Regal from behind for the belt. Can't remember the last time something like this happened, that a total unknown stepped into the ring and won a semi-major title. Wrestling is full of underdog stories, but none

ATLANTA, GA

like this one. But get this: When it was all over, I figured I'd ring up one of the wire services and see if they wanted a few hundred words. "Regal beat laukea tonight," I told the copy boy, and he says, "Spell Regal." Go figure the news business these days. First they go hiring women to do men's jobs, then they forget that wrestling was around before anybody ever heard of Dennis Rodman or Barry Bonds.

Back in New York for a few days, just taking it easy before the countdown to WrestleMania, when some guy I used to hang out with in a bar in the city 10 years ago recognizes me and says, "Hey, Matt, whaddya

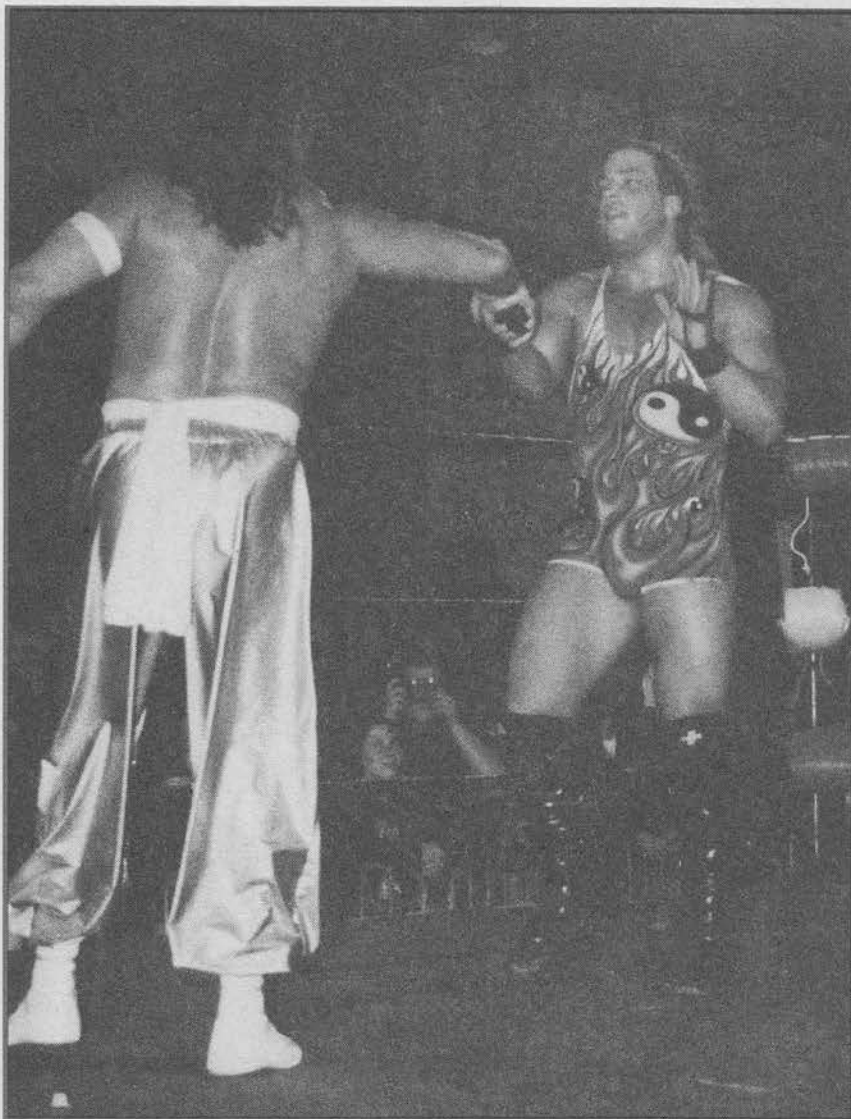
think about that broad Brandi Mankiewicz ripping you all over the Internet?" Don't know what the heck he's talking about, and he can tell, so he says, "You know, your niece." Know who Brandi Mankiewicz is. How can I forget? Red-headed skirt who might have a little Brock blood in her, who knows? "She's been saying bad things about you, like you're a sexist pig who's around past his prime."

NEW YORK, NY

Never bothered with the Internet, don't plan on bothering with it in the near future. Don't understand why anybody would want to stare at a computer screen all day when they could be looking at something else. But then this thought comes to me, something Craig Peters once told me about the anonymity of the Internet, how you never really know who's on the other end. People aren't always who they say they are. "How'd you know it was actually her?" I asked. "Sounded to me like a real witch," he said. Can't argue with that. It's her most distinguishing feature.

It irks me when people say Sabu is wasting away his career by wrestling in ECW, rather than the so-called Big Two. Tonight he teamed with Rob Van Dam at the Greyhound Park, and I was impressed. Very impressed. Don't listen to those who subscribe to the theory that it's WWF, WCW, or nothing. And especially don't listen to Jerry Lawler, who puts down ECW yet built his reputation in the USWA. (Go figure!) There is talent in practically every federation in this country, and even if I despise what ECW represents (and I do!), you can't deny the talent of a man like Sabu (or Van Dam for that matter). If you don't want to take my word for it, watch one of Sabu's matches and find out for yourself. □

REVERE, MA



SABU & VAN DAM

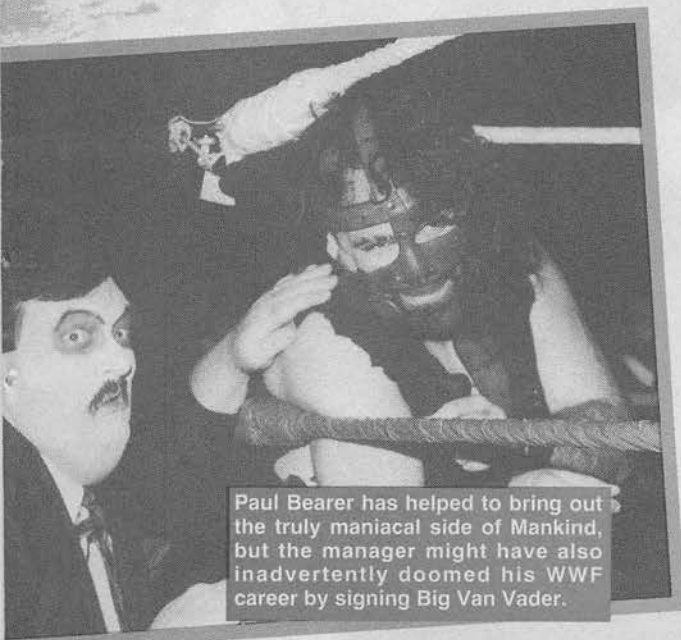
DON'T LET IT

It's not usually our place to tell you who to cheer and who to boo, but if you like watching Mankind and like seeing him succeed, keep those catcalls coming!

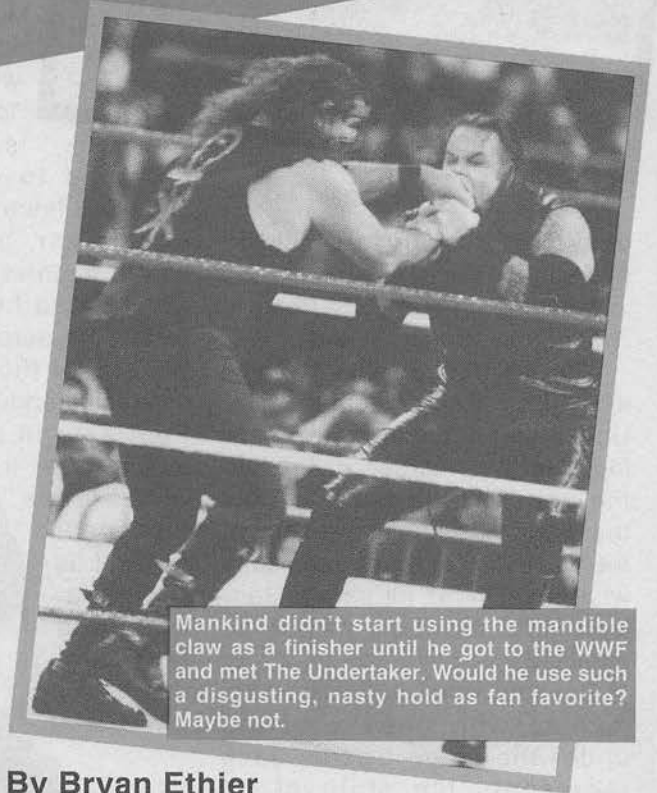


HAPPEN AGAIN!

Love
Mankind ...
And You'll
Destroy
Him!



Paul Bearer has helped to bring out the truly maniacal side of Mankind, but the manager might have also inadvertently doomed his WWF career by signing Big Van Vader.



Mankind didn't start using the mandible claw as a finisher until he got to the WWF and met The Undertaker. Would he use such a disgusting, nasty hold as fan favorite? Maybe not.

By Bryan Ethier

WITH GOLDUST ON the ropes and cheers cascading down from the fans, Mankind lifted his wolfish head and stared into the frenzied crowd. His eyes, misty, distant, seemed to plead to the fans: *Don't love me because I'm hideous.*

It wasn't an endorsement for a manufacturer of hair coloring; certainly the Miss Clairol Corp. will never use the deformed one's twisted mane in any of its ads. No, the desperation fans saw stitched into Mankind's face was testimony to the

Right now, Mankind doesn't think twice about bashing an opponent with a garbage can, or with chairs, or with the ring steps, etc. He has been known to tone down his style a little when he is soaking in fans' cheers.

really ruthless. But he smells, and that mandible claw ... yuck!"

He may lack etiquette, decorum, a complete set of ears, and adequate dental hygiene, yet somehow fans these days are starting to take a liking to Mankind.

"Everyone loves the underdog," said Maxx Payne (a.k.a. Man Mountain Rock), who used to team with him in WCW, "and that's what he is. Mankind not

only had to overcome a huge fan favorite like The Undertaker, but he also had to impress Paul Bearer. I hated him when I first came across him in WCW, but there's just something about him. People warm up to him after a while. He has tremendous grit and determination, and fans love that."

During his stint as Cactus Jack in WCW, Mankind was one of the federation's most prolific and respected wrestlers. But he was also diabolical and demented, willing to slam his head into a concrete floor to beat an opponent.

This is the man who, in 1993, suffered a serious case of amnesia and was nearly paralyzed when Big Van Vader power-bombed him onto a concrete floor. A year later, he lost part of his ear in another tussle with Vader.

Amazingly, though Mankind is short on IQ, disparaged in mainstream society, fans became drawn to him. When he arrived in WCW, he was despised. By the time he left, people loved him.

Ironically, though, such unrestrained fan support worked against him; as

depths of despair to which he has sunk.

Mankind, in many quarters, is now hearing some cheers.

The fans booed this summer when Paul Bearer dumped The Undertaker and started overseeing Mankind's career, giving him the power of the urn. But now the world has finally caught on; the twisted, one-eared maniac is what Mankind is all about. Mankind is for all of us; we are all Mankind.

But that does not mean this maniac who once wrestled under the name Cactus Jack represents the state of all Mankind. If he does, we are all in trouble.

"I can't imagine taking him home for supper," muttered Sunny, who has shown little interest in managing the maniacal marvel from Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. "He's really, uh, tough,

While wrestling as rule-breaker Cactus Jack in WCW, Mankind would sometimes let out random screams as he tortured foes like Ron Simmons (left). Now he and Simmons (a.k.a. Faarooq) are tenuous allies (opposite page, right). When he's at his best, Mankind has few wrestling friends.

the boos turned to cheers, Cactus Jack played to the fans and abandoned, to some extent, the maniacal approach that had made him such a feared opponent in the first place.

And as Cactus Jack earned more and more respect from the fans, he lost the respect of the one person vital to his success—himself. It cost him his future in WCW.

So he packed his bags for ECW. He had a fresh approach, a new commitment to mania and insanity. A drive to completely alienate fans and foes alike. Ultimately, he failed, however. In time, the ECW's discriminating fans grew to love him *because* he was so deranged and deformed. And he started complaining that those fans were too bloodthirsty, that they demanded too much from the wrestlers.

He arrived in the WWF last year with a new—*er*, old—attitude. He was again bent on nauseating even people as bloodthirsty as Wes Craven, king of horror movies. The leather mask, the hunched gait, the mandible claw—enough to make the bile creep up in your throat.

He got top competitors like Shawn Michaels, The Undertaker, and Goldust to wrestle his kind of matches.

He fought in the ring, in the stands, in caskets, in makeshift graveyards, in boiler rooms. He fought everyone and everything. Nearly killed Michaels during their memorable match last September, at an In Your House in Philadelphia. Mankind went out of his way to make us hate him; he stole Paul Bearer from our favorite zombie. He made the urn his own.

But now that he seems on the verge of rekindling his feud with Vader, he also seems on the verge of turning fan favorite again. How long before all the fans are looking upon him with adoring eyes ... and before he is

looking at them the way an abused mutt looks into the eyes of a new owner who finally appreciates him?

"Not a good sign," remarked Harley Race, Vader's manager in WCW. "He's a driven, talented wrestler who will get in the ring with anyone, duke it out in any style. If Mankind goes soft and soaks in those cheers, he's done. There might not be any saving him."

Is it too late to save Mankind, or is mankind about to ruin one of the world's most underrated wrestlers? When is too much love bad for a person?

It's bad when it changes a person, when everything that person does is geared toward satisfying the wants and needs of another, when that person loses sight of who he is. As long as Mankind puts the fans ahead of his own needs, he will fail. He was a winner, you might say, because he was a loser, an outcast—at least in the fans' eyes.

And that's what he needs to be. □



Even if he does turn fan favorite, Mankind most likely will not stop using daredevil moves like this one. But every wrestler who starts looking to the fans for approval changes somewhat. And not always for the better.



THE INNER TURMOIL THAT IS TEARING LEX LUGER APART

You say you envy

Lex Luger?

You'd like to walk

a mile in his

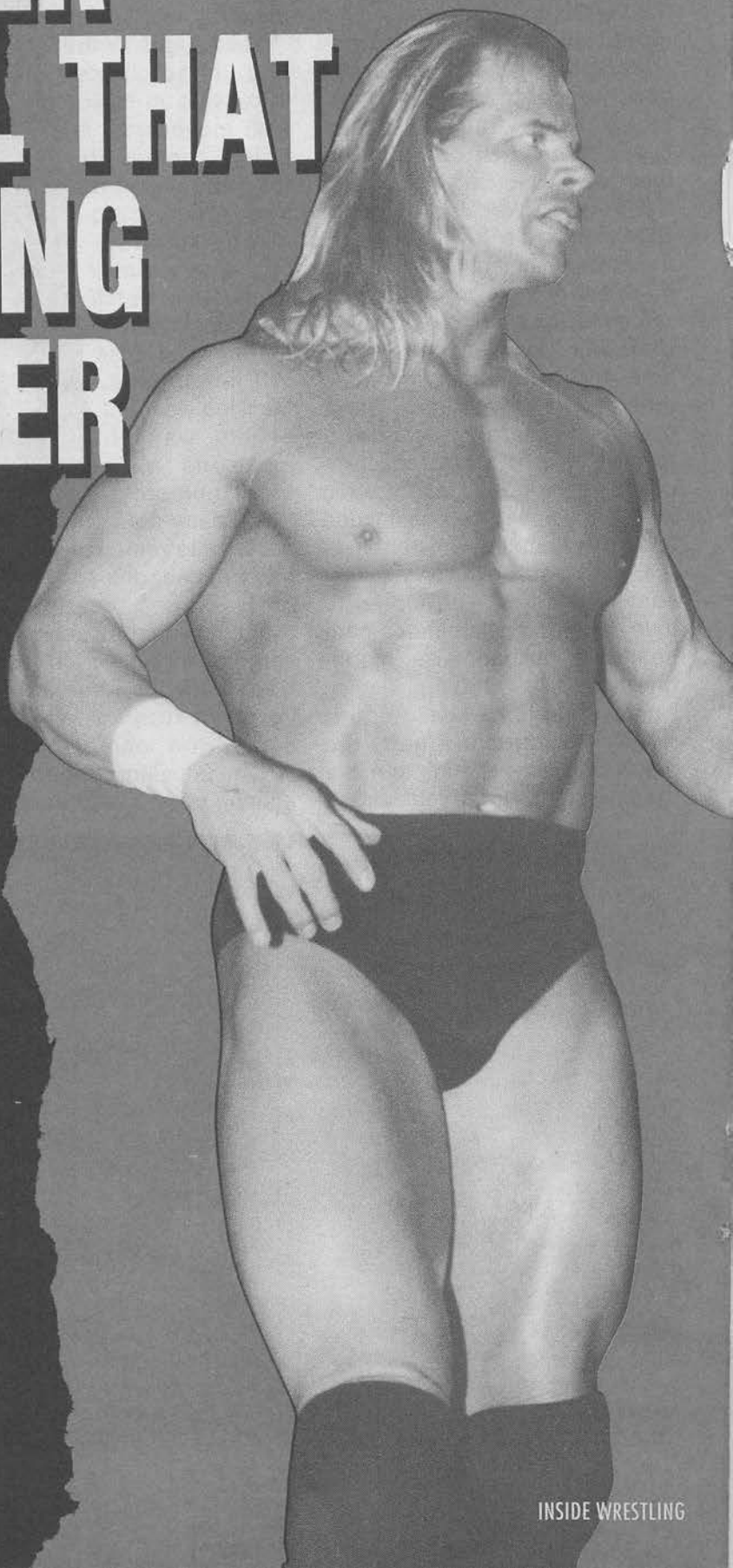
wrestling boots?

Taste the fruits of

success he

enjoys daily?

Don't be so sure!



By Craig Peters

LEX LUGER Raised his muscular arms in a victorious acknowledgement of the cheers of the crowd.

But there was no victory celebration inside the ring. There really didn't need to be: Luger was an overwhelming favorite going into the match, and the fact that he won came as a surprise to absolutely nobody.

So Luger did what he usually does: He coolly signaled his recognition of the win, stepped through the ropes to the arena floor, and casually slapped a few dozen fives on the way back to the dressing room.

When he got there, he sat.

And he listened.

And through the arena wall, he heard screaming.

"Somebody! It's gotta be somebody! Can The Giant get the job done? Not alone! Sting's so wigged out, he's no good!"

The sound of a metal chair hitting a locker door filtered through the concrete block wall to Luger's ears. Lex knew well the sound he was hearing: frustration.

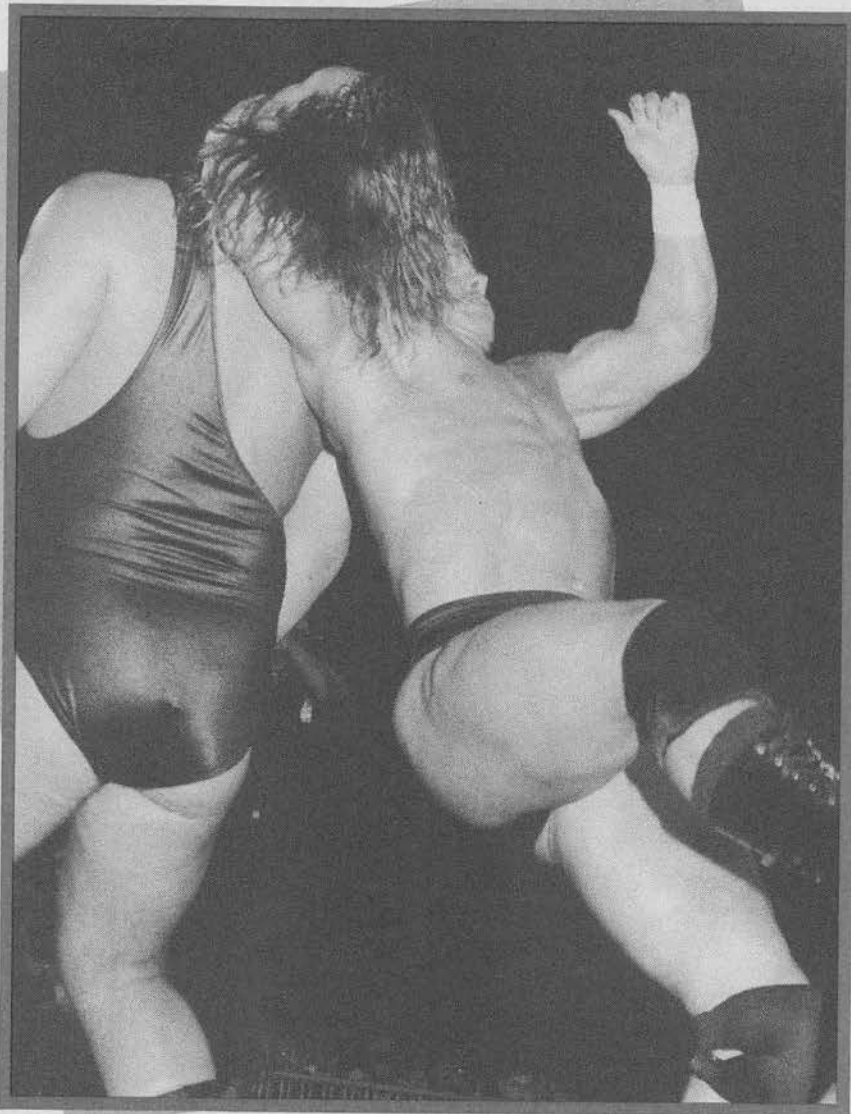
"Been there, felt that," Luger told *INSIDE WRESTLING*. "And you want to know something?"

Luger left his own question hanging in the air like a pinata, waiting to be smashed open by the reporter's insistence. But the pinata hung untouched. And Luger continued to listen to muffled words coming through unforgiving walls.

Then he spoke.

"You think I don't hear what's being said about me? That I ought to be the one to provide the leadership for WCW that everybody's groaning and moaning about? Man, there are no secrets in the dressing rooms. I hear it all, whether I want to or not."

Luger stood up, paced a few



Lex Luger reaches high to execute a neckbreaker on The Giant. Just a few months ago, he was feuding with the big man. Now they're partners. He isn't ready to trust him completely, though.

anxious circles, then lifted a metal chair and answered the smash heard moments earlier with his own crashing impact of chair and locker.

Then he calmed himself and sat down, the inner turmoil that is clearly eating away at his soul silenced once again.

For now.

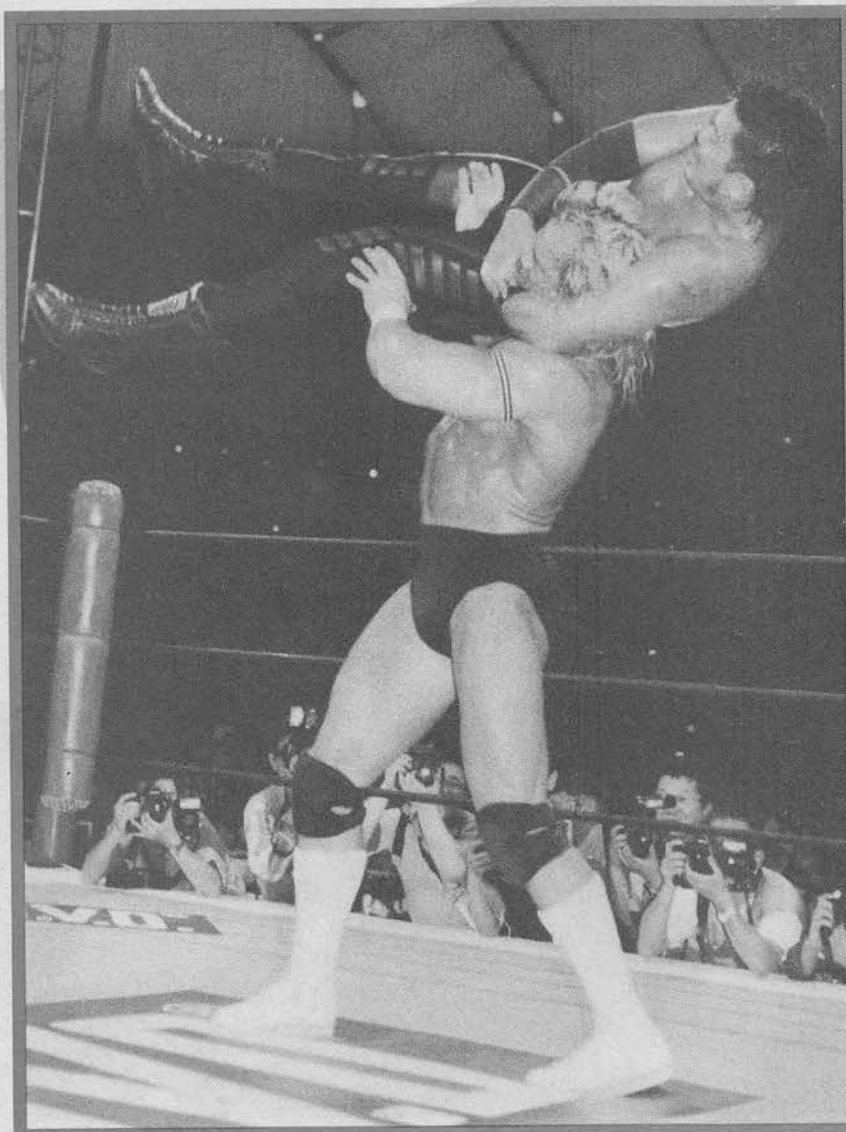
"What gets me is that people aren't judging me or damning me or talking about me in terms of what I've done; they're talking about me in terms of what I *haven't* done!" said Luger, frustration evident in every word. "I haven't given WCW the kind of

leadership it deserves, I haven't placed the kind of trust in The Giant that he deserves, I haven't done anything to help Sting and his ..."

Luger once again silenced himself. He was anxious to speak, but also anxious to keep quiet. The conflict was evident in his face, knotted by frustration.

"I am in a prime spot right now, and the World title is ripe for the taking. Training, sparring, some attention paid to a title drive, and that gold is mine. Is that being selfish? Tell me, is that being selfish?!"

The reporter answered that accomplishment and selfishness



Lex would probably love to have the chance to wrestle Masa Chono again now that Chono is with the NWO. "The Total Package" is upset that some people feel he hasn't been enough of a leader for WCW.

stared at the fountain for no particular reason, except that his mind was a million miles away from that fountain and that dressing room, and in all likelihood, he was speaking not to the reporter in the room, but to himself.

"It's not easy at the top. Never has been, never will be. Expectations. Demands. It's more than an autograph here or a personal appearance there. It's life decisions. Every day's a fork in the road. Which way to go? Beats the hell out of me. Not an easy decision, because there'll be more tomorrow."

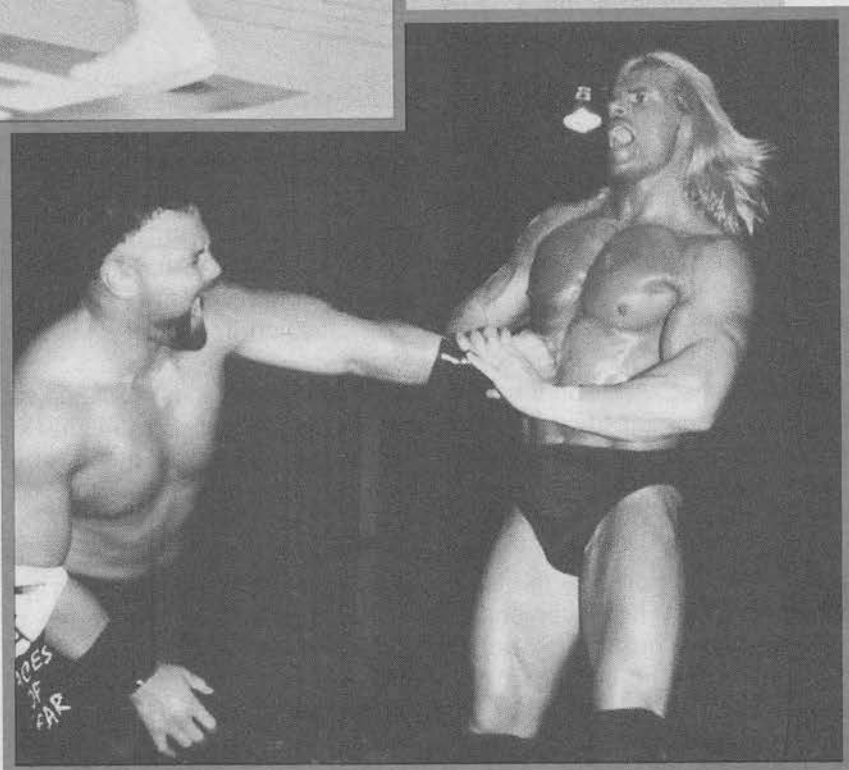
Luger sat down again and turned to the reporter. "What about you? What would you do if you were me? Championship gold? Put it all on the back burner and ignore whatever personal career glories might lie just within your reach? Put your career on

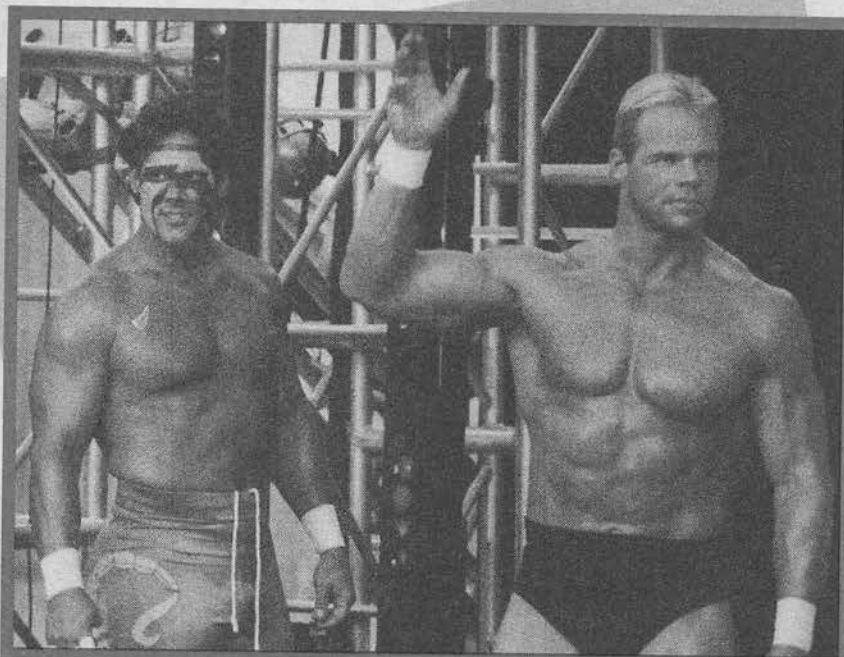
aren't necessarily qualities that go hand in hand.

"Yeah, yeah, I know what you're saying," Luger responded. "What's accomplishment, after all? What's success, after all? Is it money? Power? A legacy for the future? A page in history? Hell, go watch *It's A Wonderful Life* and you'll come away thinking it's friends and only friends."

Luger stood and walked across the dressing room, where he took a deep drink from the water fountain. When he was through, he

Luger (shown against The Barbarian) is so strong and so confident that he'd like to make another serious run at the WCW World title. He's just not sure if other issues should take priority.





What's up with Sting? Luger is supposedly his best friend, so he should know, right? He should have gotten through to Sting by now, right? Maybe we're asking too much of Luger on this one.

everything," Luger said. "Tired of the decisions, tired of the politics, tired of all the crap that's ... ahhh-hhh ... screw it, I've said too much already. Get the outta here, I gotta wash up."

The match was over. Luger was headed to the showers. But the night ahead would find "The Total Package" wrestling with inner demons in perhaps the most important bout of his life.

WCW—indeed, the entire wrestling world—awaits the outcome of the battle. □

hold for ... for what, the expectations of the fans? The whims of other wrestlers you're not even sure will be there by your side when you need them next month, next week, or next match?"

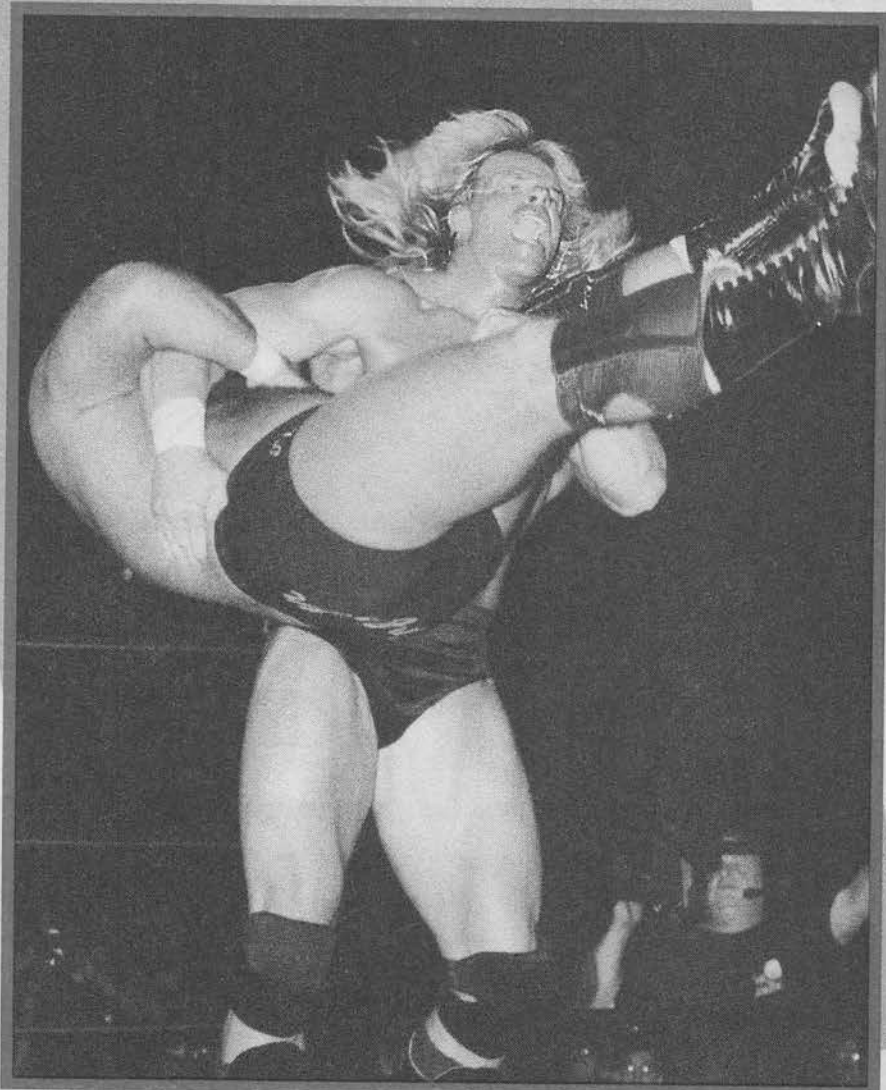
Luger drew a deep breath, and the response he was given was probably not the one he wanted to hear. Still, it was the only one possible, and the one that, deep down, he probably knew he'd hear.

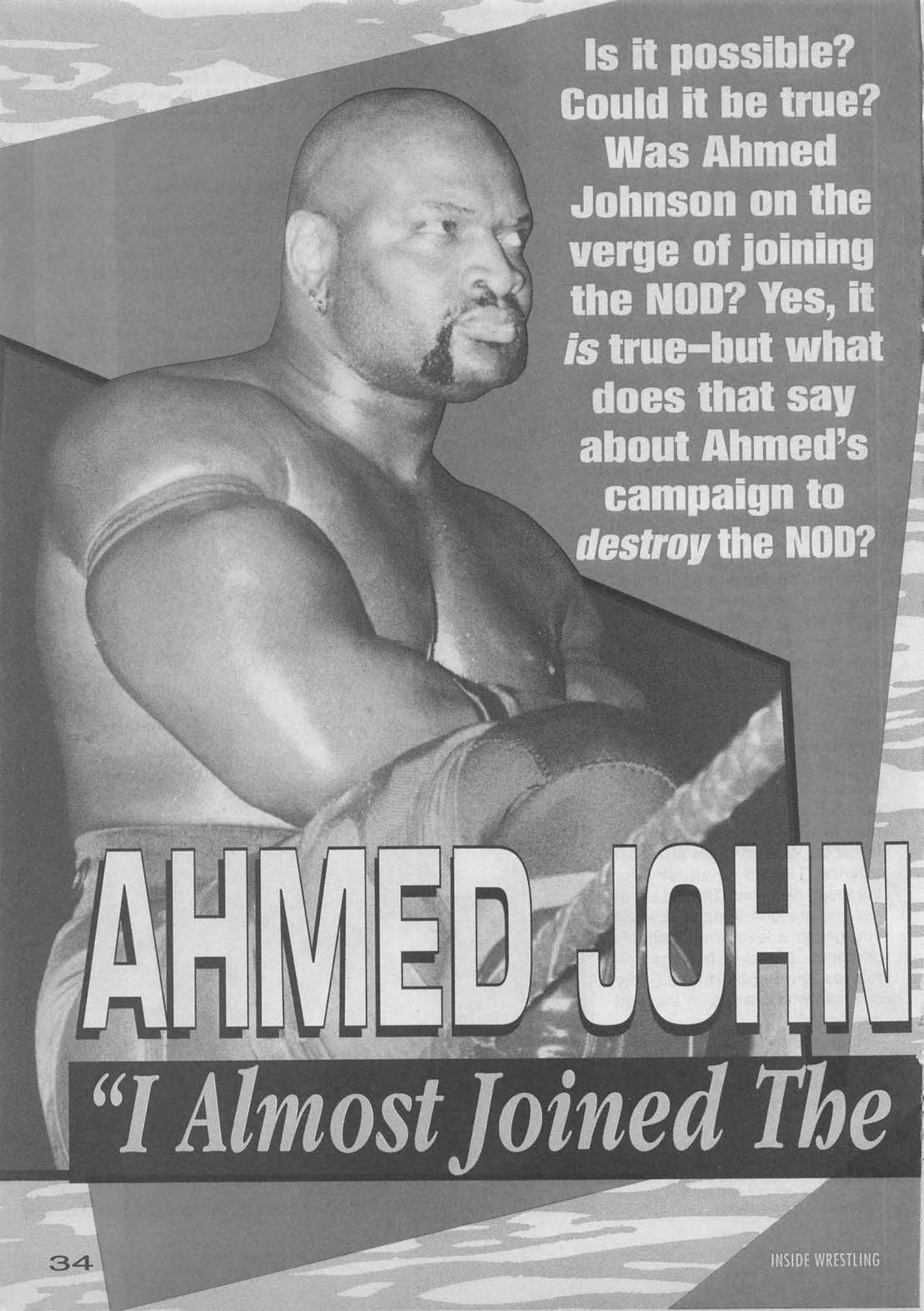
"Every man's different," Luger heard with his ears, and undoubtedly felt in his heart. "And every man has to examine himself and follow the dictates of his own conscience. There's no advising for the tough decisions. Shared experiences are one thing, but when you get to a level this intensely personal, a level of feelings and futures and hopes, there's only one man who can answer the hard questions."

Luger knew the reporter was right, and didn't have to say so; the sigh of resignation said it all.

"Damn it, I'm getting tired of

The best thing fans—and maybe some of the wrestlers in WCW—could do for Lex Luger would be to let him alone. Just let him wrestle and let him decide what's best for his career.





**Is it possible?
Could it be true?
Was Ahmed
Johnson on the
verge of joining
the NOD? Yes, it
is true—but what
does that say
about Ahmed's
campaign to
destroy the NOD?**

AHMED JOHNSON

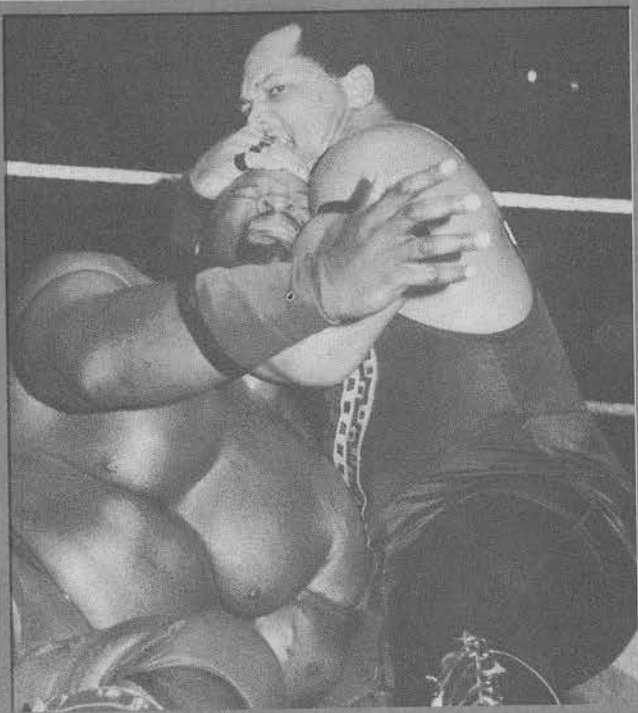
“I Almost Joined The

By Dave Lenker

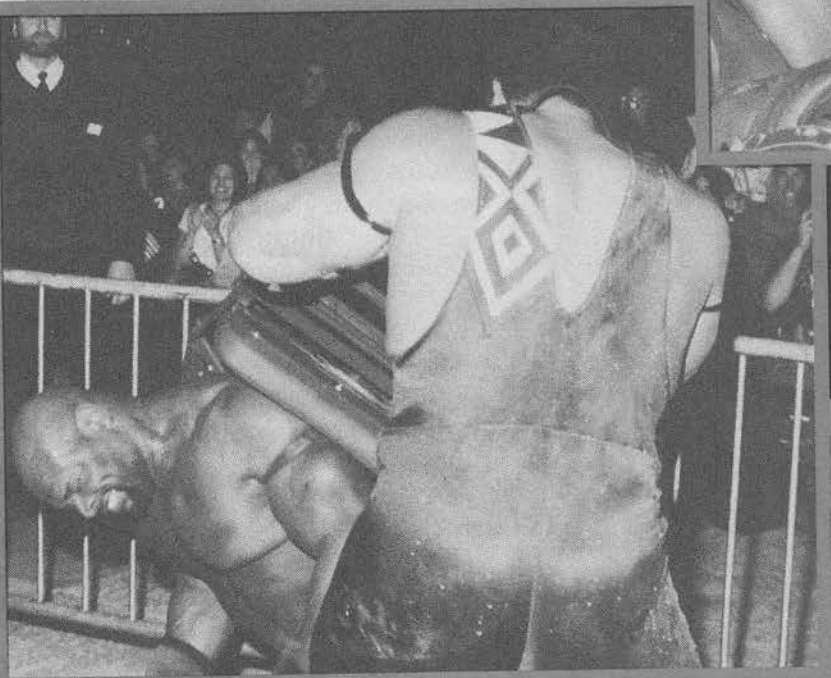
THE VEINS IN the temples of Clarence Mason were bulging as the flamboyant lawyer raised his oratory to new heights.

"And when the Nation of Domination is finally able to take its proper place at the upper levels of the World Wrestling Federation, in the ring, in management, in all forms of proper power and influence, we will be judged by the public, and judged to be true and honorable and correct! Because the sum total of the righteousness and strength of character that ..."

Ahmed Johnson had been staring at the television with a face as stern and unmoving as if it



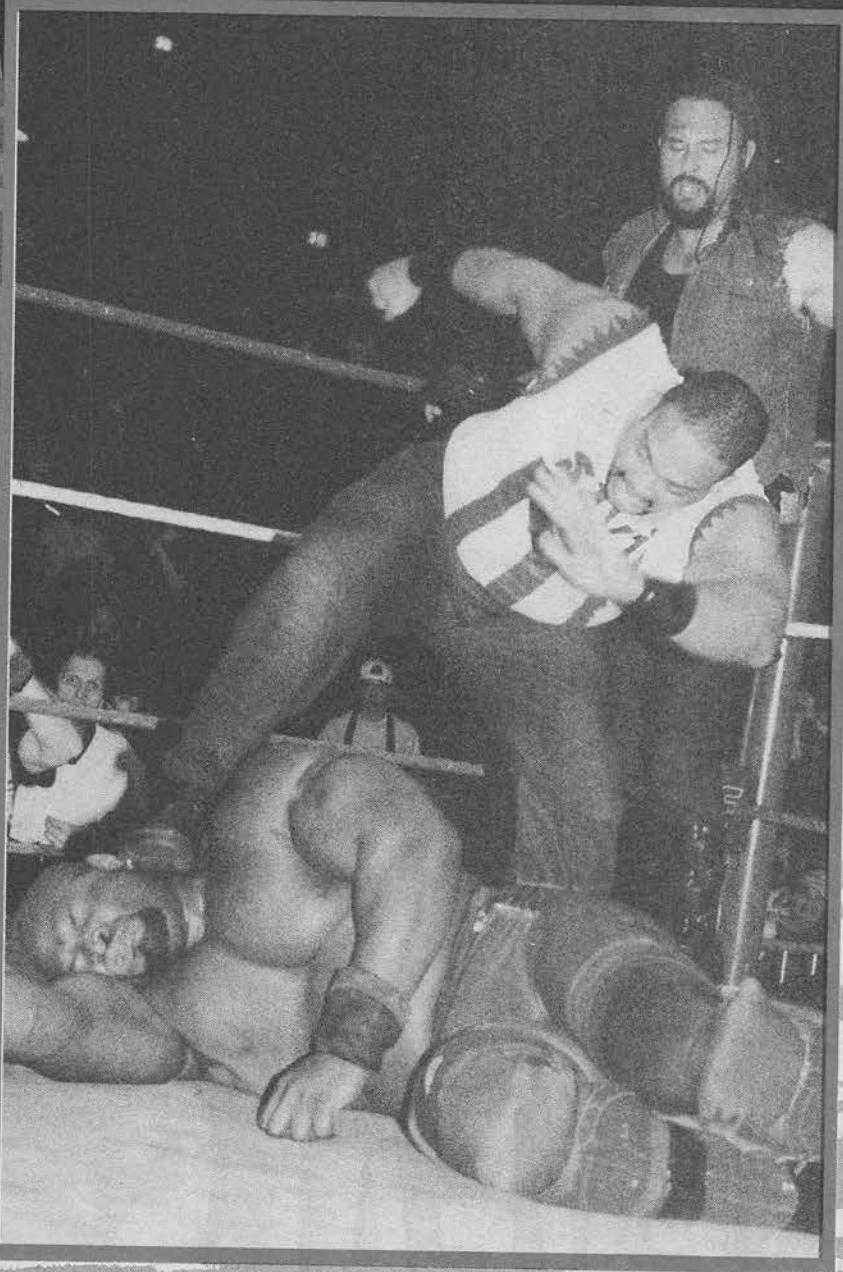
Faarooq has worn Ahmed down with sleeperholds (above) and bashed him with chair after chair (left), so why would he consider joining this man's group of thugs? Because he cares about his friends!



SON REVEALS:

Nation Of Domination"

When Savio Vega turned against him and joined the NOD himself, Ahmed had to think seriously about signing with the group, too. He was afraid the NOD would go after all his other friends.



had been chiseled out of solid granite. But he'd had enough. He rose from the bench, strode slowly across the dressing room, and pressed the "eject" button on the VCR with a meaty finger. He removed the videocassette from the machine, placed it on the floor, and stomped it with his wrestling boot.

Hard.

Shards of plastic flew everywhere. Ahmed reached down, grabbed a fistful of loose videotape, and shot a perfect three-pointer into the trash can across the room, a trail of tape flying behind like a tail on a kite.

"And *that*, Clarence Mason, you slimy, scummy, weasel, is what I think of you and your

Nation of Domination."

Ahmed spit into the trash can, the thick wad of saliva dripping into the folds of the crushed and crumpled tape lending an appropriately vulgar piece of punctuation to Ahmed's not-so-subtle feelings.

"Man, I can't believe I almost joined the Nation of Domination."

Huh?

Say what?

Come again?

Ahmed stared steely-eyed at the reporter, measuring himself mentally. Leave it at that? Elaborate?

"Yeah, I'll tell ya 'bout it. Sure."

This, the reporter knew, was gonna be *good*.

"It was a coupla months ago. Weird time. Man, they wanted me, and they wanted me bad."

"They" being the Nation of Domination, of course.

"Right. Seemed like I couldn't walk six feet without running into something from them. Letters from Mason, all formal and flowery and promising the world to me. Yeah, right! Like I'm gonna listen to that dirtbag! Notes from Faarooq about how great the NOD was and how it's the future of the sport and all like that.

"Man, you wanna hear crap? You wanna read some non-sense? You should have seen some of that stuff!"

Then came the note in early January.

"That was different, man. It was really something else."

As Ahmed explains it, it was a note not from any individual in the NOD, but a message from the NOD as a whole.

And it was quite frightening.

"This letter, man, this had a feeling to it ... it wasn't a recruitment thing like the others. This was different. This was a threat. Big-time. Straight-up. That if I didn't join, I'd be sorry. And not for me, because they were gonna come after my friends,

one by one, pick 'em off all around me step by step before coming after me."

Then they started to do exactly that.

In late-January at Madison Square Garden, Ahmed teamed with Savio Vega in a match against Crush and Faarooq. Ahmed was winning the match for his team, and the three-count seemed just moments away. Savio insisted on tagging in, so Ahmed went to the corner and tagged in his friend.

Seconds later, Ahmed knew the NOD had gotten to his friend.

The brief beating that Savio inflicted on Ahmed was brutal, and allowed Faarooq to score the pin and the win. But one more notch in the win column was nothing: This was one friend down and who knows what else to go in the NOD's war with Ahmed.

Ahmed hadn't answered the threat letter ... so the NOD answered it for him.

"That scared me," Ahmed explained. "I figured, man, if they could get to Savio, who else could they get to, you know? How far would they go? And I knew they'd stop at nothing. So ... so yeah, I thought about it."

Like a man caught in a hostage situation, Ahmed was ready to make the ultimate sacrifice: offer himself up if the NOD would leave his friends alone.

"I thought it over for a long time. A long time. Gave it some big-time serious thought. Even talked with some of my friends about it. Had a great talk one night with Rocky [Maivia]. He put it a good way. He said, 'Ahmed, it's not gonna stop if you make this move. They're still gonna come after whoever they wanna come after. But once they have you, they have you, and you can't let that hap-

pen. Stay here, where we need you, where the fans need you, where the sport needs you. Your friends? We can take care of ourselves. And we can all stick together. We're a hell of a lot stronger with you than without you.'

"I knew Rocky was right. I wanted to make the move ... for a while. I wanted to join, but only to stop the carnage. But Rocky's right. Wouldn't have stopped nothin'. Now I can

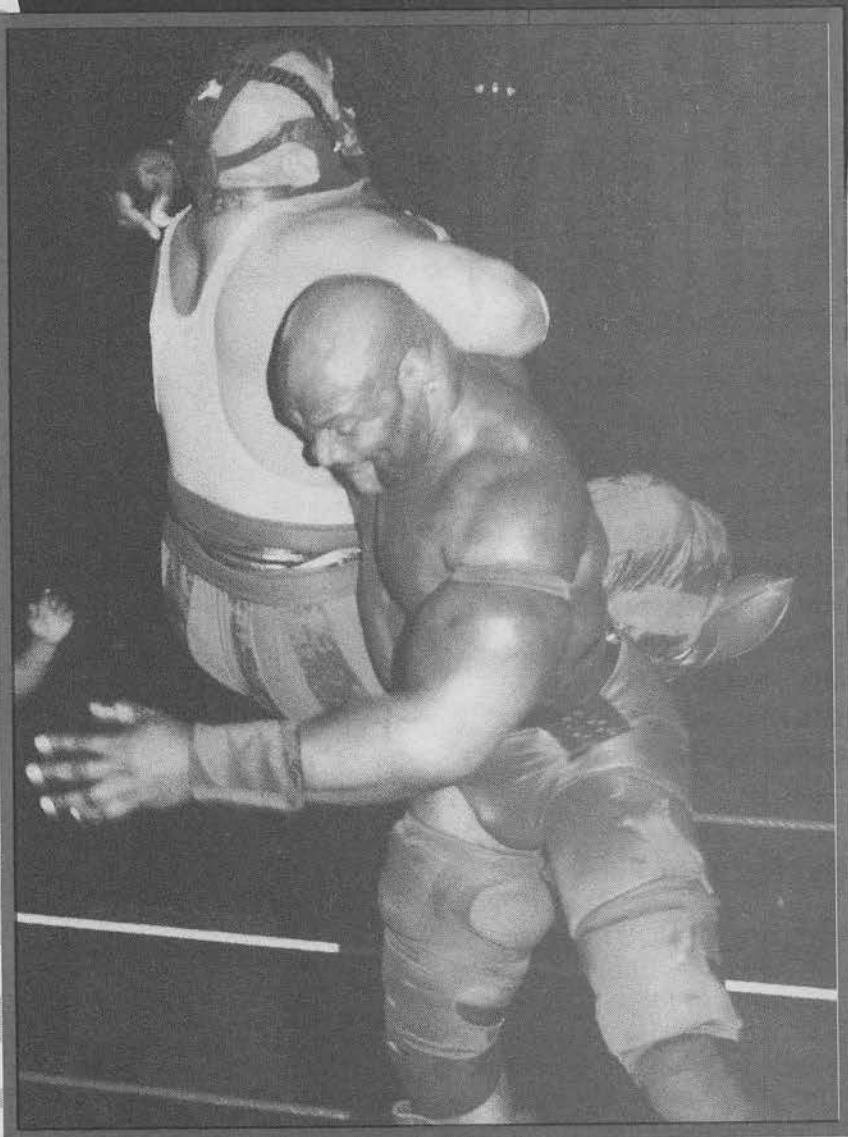
promise you it *is* gonna stop ... and I'm gonna be the one to bring it to an end, no matter what it takes. Hey—take this!"

Ahmed lobbed another hefty goober into the garbage pail.

"There's a lot more where that came from, Mason, you pig!"

Then Ahmed left the dressing room ... to contemplate his next move in his war against the NOD ... a war he is now determined to fight until the bitter end. □

Ahmed knows how to handle the Sultan, and he doesn't like the guy, so he doesn't care if he goes NOD. He is more committed than ever to crushing Faarooq's group.

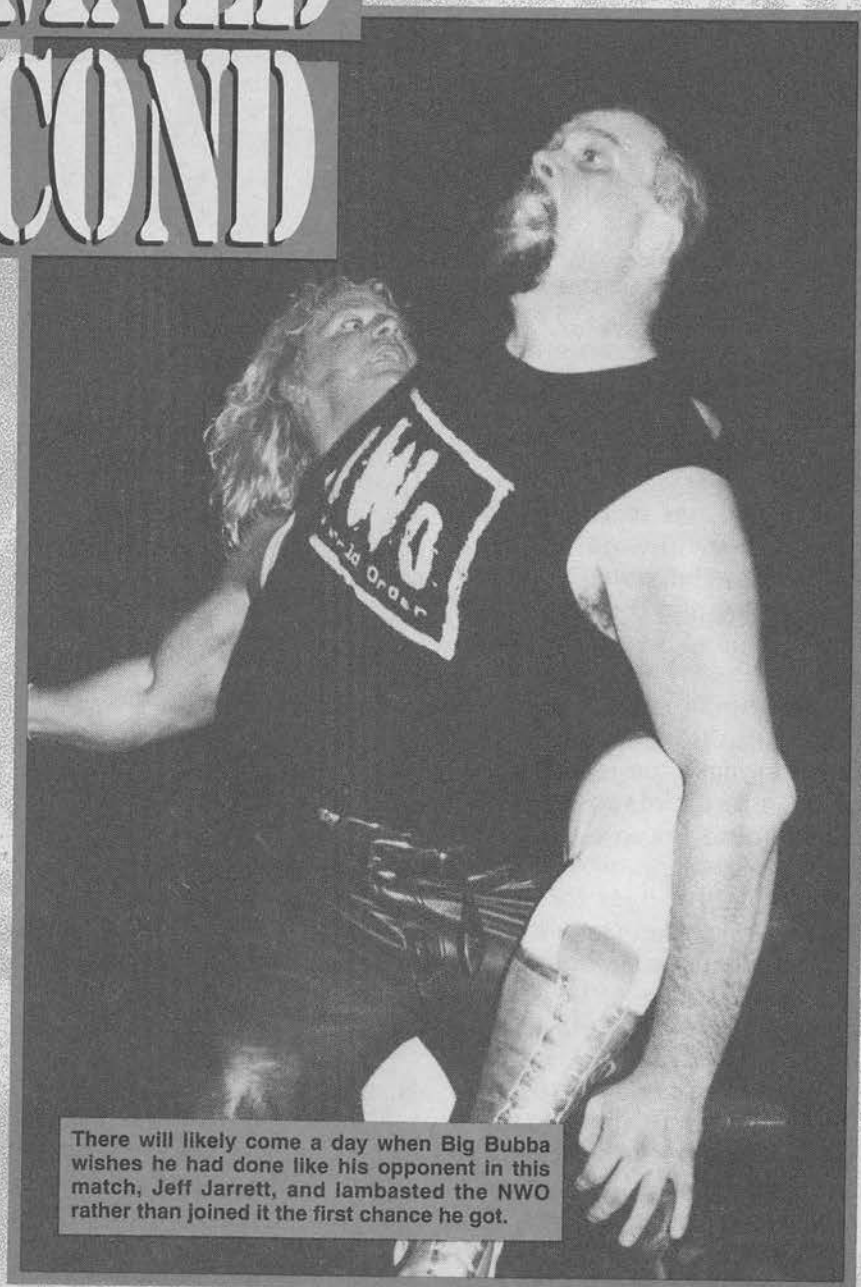


Use Them, Then Lose Them: HOW THE NWO CONDEMNED ITS SECOND SQUAD

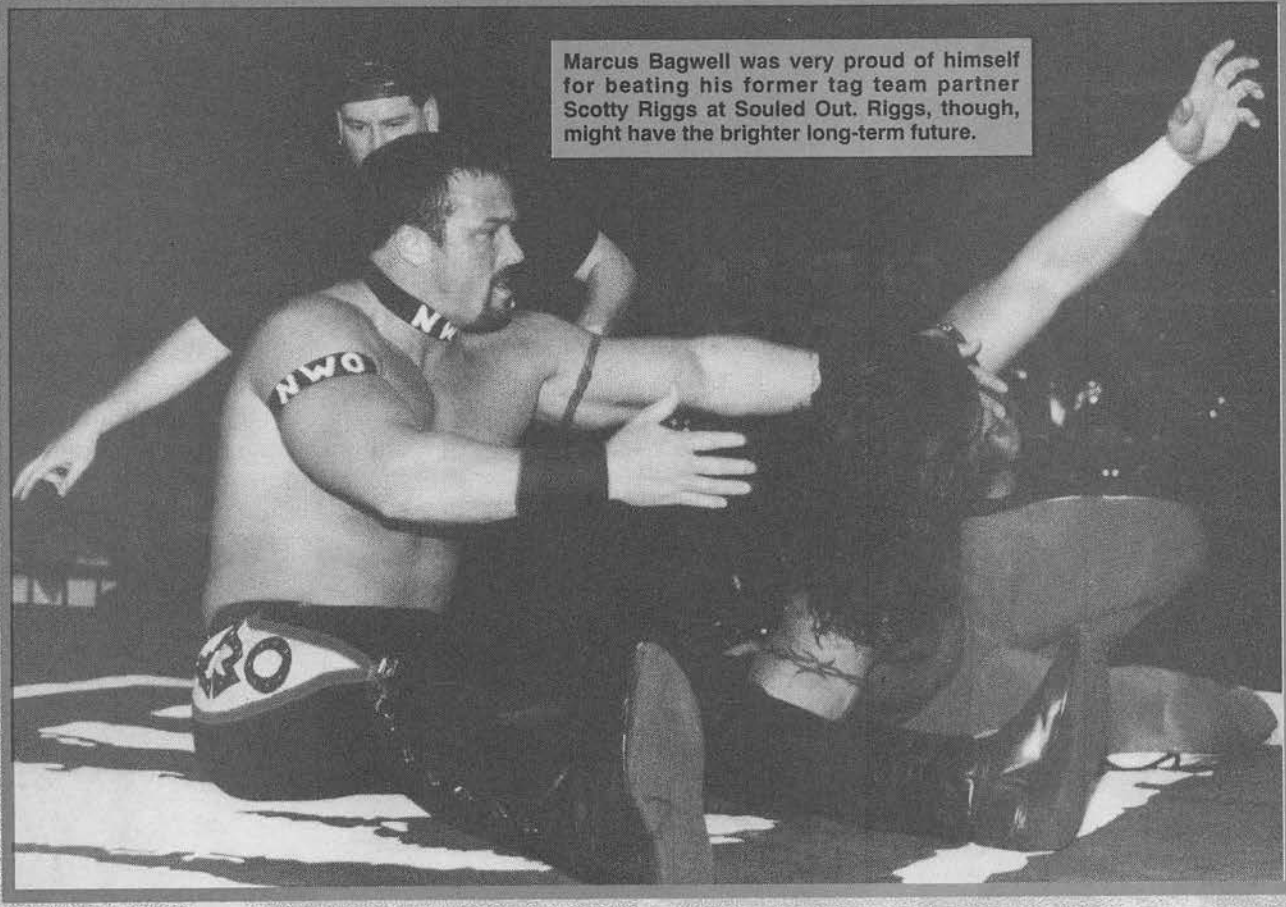
Every army needs foot soldiers. The NWO is no exception. Certain members have been deemed dispensable. It is time for those men to realize their inevitable fate. But even if they do, their careers might already be doomed

By Harry Burkett

THROUGHOUT THE AGES, they have been known as cannon fodder. During the heat of battle, less-desirable individuals were placed on the front lines to absorb an opposing army's swords, arrows, bullets, or



There will likely come a day when Big Bubba wishes he had done like his opponent in this match, Jeff Jarrett, and lambasted the NWO rather than joined it the first chance he got.



Marcus Bagwell was very proud of himself for beating his former tag team partner Scotty Riggs at Souled Out. Riggs, though, might have the brighter long-term future.

cannon fire. Convicts, beggars, or just ordinary citizens often formed a human shield for commanding generals and their closest lieutenants. If a certain number of soldiers were destined to become casualties, it might as well have been people the elite didn't about.

That may be an approach suitable for the Dark Ages, but this technique is still being employed in the 20th century. Namely, in the New World Order's war against WCW.

So, who would qualify as cannon fodder for the NWO? Its "second squad," of course. Men like the NWO Sting, Marcus Bagwell, Big Bubba Rogers, M. Wall Street, and Scott Norton are likely to be casualties in this conflict.

Within the NWO, a two-tiered organization with definite lines of distinction has formed. Hulk Hogan, Kevin Nash, Scott Hall, Eric Bischoff, and Ted DiBiase

are its central members. Six, because of his friendship with Hall and previous business relationship with DiBiase, must be considered as part of the elite as well.

Because Hogan, Nash, and Hall hold the WCW World heavyweight and World tag team titles, respectively, and because since Six remains a top contender to both the U.S. and cruiserweight championships, there can be only two reasons for the enlistment of other members. One, the NWO's elite need a buffer zone. Two, by getting these men to jump from WCW to the NWO, the NWO showed that it is powerful enough to scare wrestlers into joining. Remember, they all joined around the time Bischoff threatened to come after every WCW wrestler who didn't convert his WCW contract into an NWO contract.

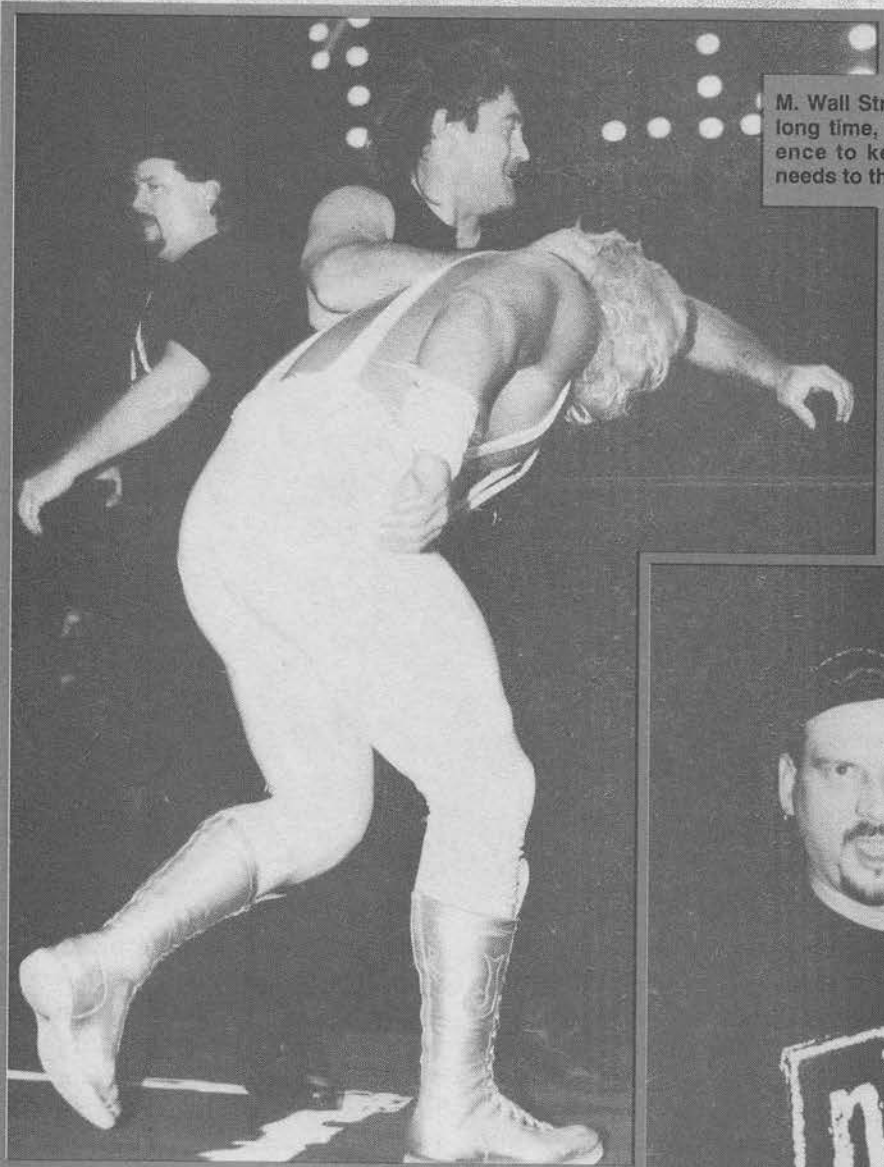
Sure enough, whenever the

NWO leadership needs protection, the second squad has been ready for action. Not only have members of this group intervened whenever an irate Giant Hogan, but they are also the first to carry out an ambush if it is deemed necessary.

They usually get pounded.

Vincent, DiBiase's right-hand man, is the link between the first and second tiers of the organization. He makes sure that NWO Sting, Bagwell, Bubba, and the others do what they're told. The NWO elite watches the second squad carefully, waiting to see if anyone is worthy of becoming member of the group's upper echelon.

Scotty Riggs thinks his former partner, Bagwell, is the only wrestler capable of ascending the NWO's ranks. "Marcus is exactly the kind of person the NWO loves. He's totally devoid of



M. Wall Street has been a friend of Ted DiBiase for a long time, but if he thinks DiBiase will use his influence to keep him in the NWO long-term, well, he needs to think again.

barriers prevent him from interacting with Hogan, Nash, or Hall on a personal level. Besides, Bischoff seems satisfied to allow Chono to remain the group's unofficial leader in Japan.

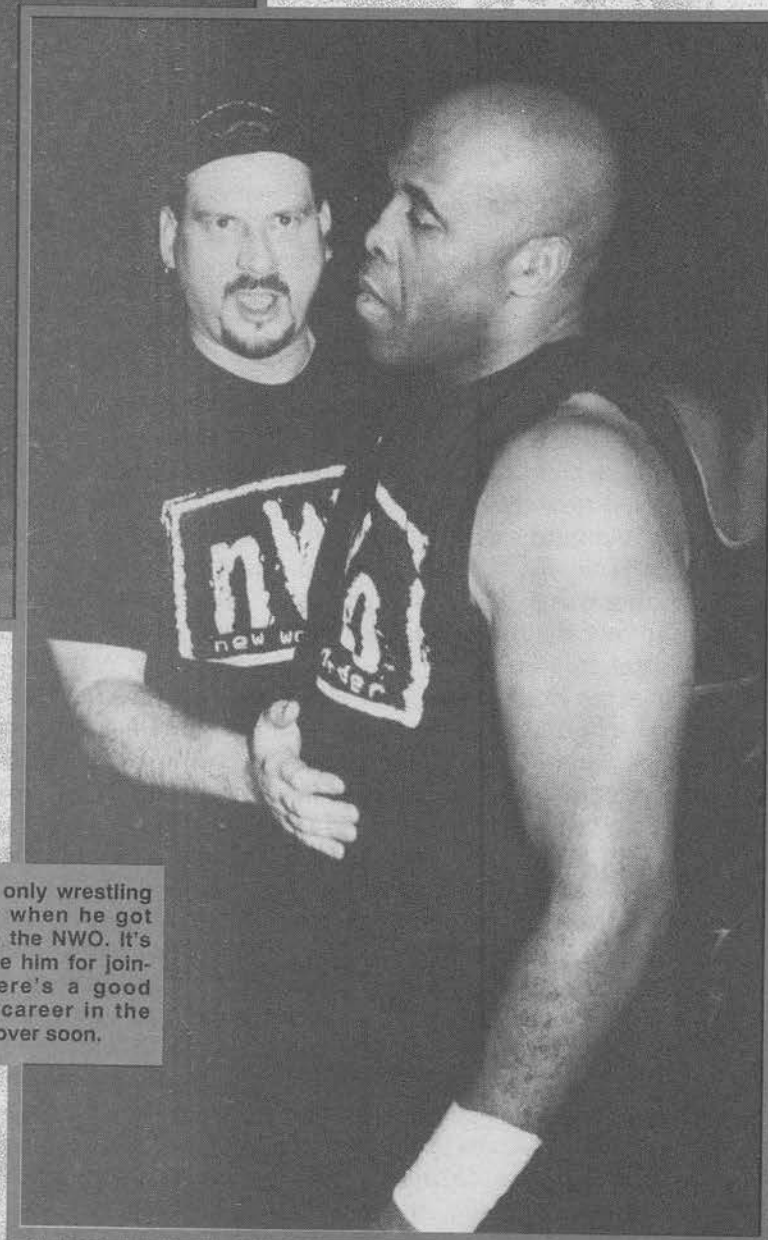
The remaining members were struggling through the undercard ranks before the NWO brought

moral character and only cares about himself," he said. "The only reason he joined those guys is because he was afraid to fight them. I told him Bischoff was just trying to scare everyone, but he didn't listen. But you can see by his new 'Buff' persona that he can easily blend in with Hogan and The Outsiders.

"I'll admit that Marcus is very talented and shows a lot of promise. Maybe that will impress them."

Masa Chono also has the talent to be considered a major force in the NWO. But cultural

Vincent was only wrestling periodically when he got the call from the NWO. It's hard to blame him for joining, but there's a good chance his career in the sport will be over soon.



them to prominence. They are the most likely to run into a dead end.

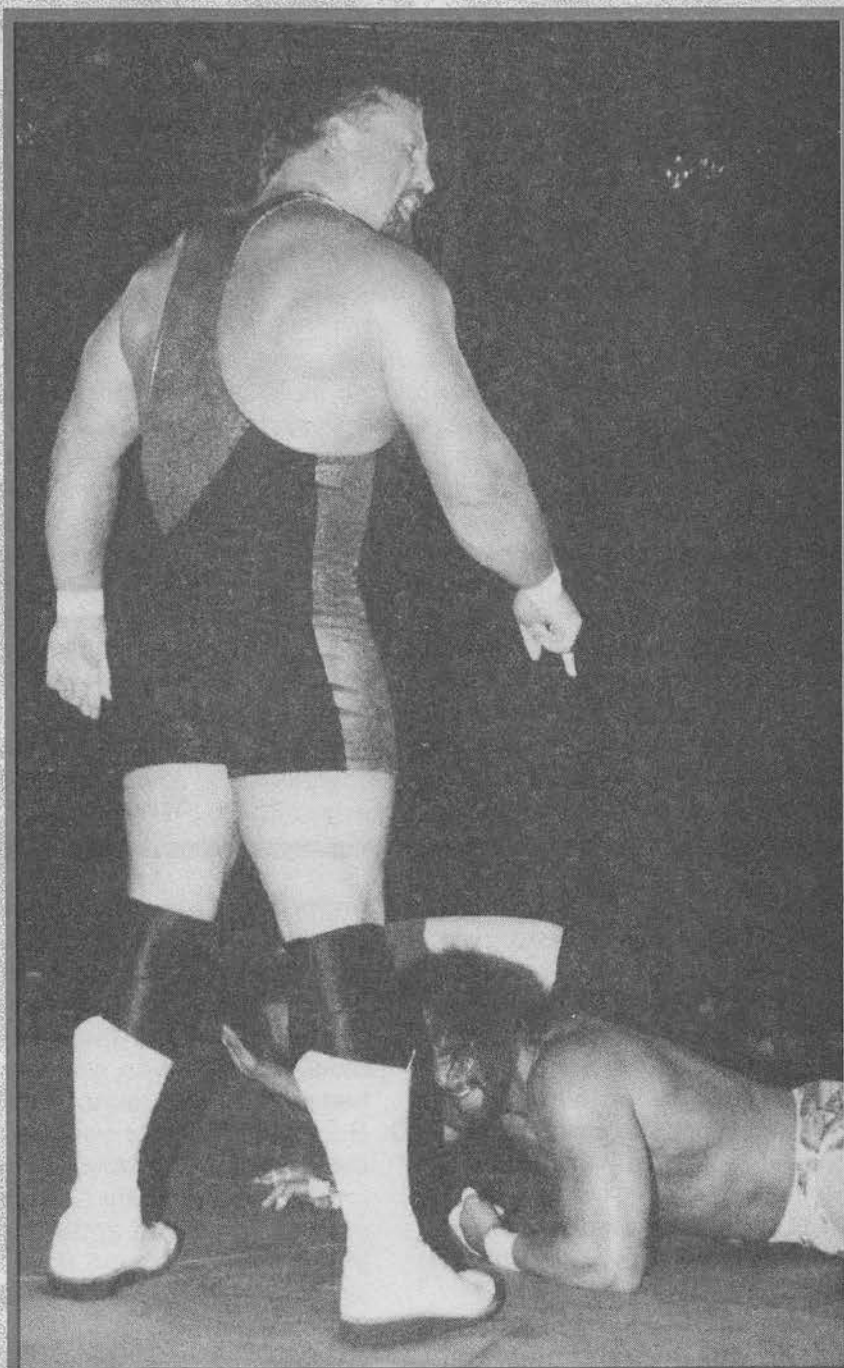
"I don't understand all this analysis of the NWO's corporate structure," said Ted DiBiase. "Everyone has a role to play. We hired each man because certain services need to be performed."

"Our Sting has an obvious purpose. Big Bubba gives us information on how to handle the Dungeon of Doom. My association with Mr. Wall Street has lasted for several years. His financial knowledge benefits the NWO, and he remains a close confidant of mine. And Scott Norton provides excellent backup. He's one of the strongest guys I've ever seen. All these guys know their boundaries—and who occupies the upper management positions. They are integral parts of our master plan."

Members of the second squad are not only relegated to a lesser status behind the scenes, but also in the eyes of the wrestling public. The NWO Sting, Rogers, and Norton are rarely seen conversing with Hogan, Nash, Hall, or Six. They even use different theme music than the NWO's elite.

The leaders of the NWO don't seem to care about the win-loss records of members of the second squad, either. Neither DiBiase nor Bischoff ever accompanies any of them to the ring or offers much support during their matches. In fact, if any of these guys became inordinately successful, they might be considered a threat to the group's power structure. And that is something the NWO leadership may be reluctant to change.

"I'd like to know who's been sayin' I'm a second-class citizen!" screamed Big Bubba Rogers. "The NWO wants me around because I can create a ruckus, kick somebody's tail, and be the baddest man in town. The lowlifes



Scott Norton is still a big star in Japan, and he had better be glad for that. When the NWO drops him, he probably won't be welcomed back by WCW.

who say anything different are nothin' but pieces of trash!"

Riggs says a dark day may be coming for some NWO members. "It doesn't take the Psychic Friends Network to predict what's going to happen next," he said. "Hogan and DiBiase will be ready to drop some of the dead weight.

Then what will happen to guys like Bubba and Wall Street? The same thing that happened to The Booty Man. They'll be men without a country ... and without jobs.

"And nobody will feel sorry for them, because for the rest of their lives, they'll be known as traitors." □

DAVEY BOY SMITH

"THE TOUGH TIMES MADE US STRONGER!"

DAVEY BOY SMITH is one of the most respected rulebreakers in wrestling today. Is this an oxymoron? Not really. Despite a harsher attitude, he still retains a sense of honor and decorum that is absent in many fan favorites.

The "British Bulldog" was one of the most popular athletes in the sport until he attacked then-WWF World champion Kevin "Diesel" Nash in August 1995. Shortly after Shawn Michaels' title victory at WrestleMania XII, Smith was deemed the number-one challenger to the championship. The spotlight was then thrust upon Diana Smith, his wife, when she accused the champion of making indecent proposals to her. Davey Boy gave "The Heartbreak Kid" a few bumps and bruises along the way, but he

never realized his dream of becoming WWF champ.

Later in the year, Smith began teaming with his brother-in-law Owen Hart. The duo captured the WWF tag team title from The Smokin' Gunns on September 22, 1996. Smith and Hart soon established themselves as dominant champions.

Observers still wonder if Smith is totally comfortable wrestling as a rulebreaker. He saved Bret from an attack by "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin in November and is often seen posing for fans in the crowd. This, in addition to recent arguments with Owen, has led some to believe that Smith is ready for another change of heart. Senior Writer Harry Burkett talked to him about that and much more after a recent WWF card.

Q: Thank you for speaking with me, Davey Boy. I know you are anxious to get some rest after your grueling match tonight.

A: You thought that match was grueling? I hardly broke a sweat. Someone in my condition is capable of wrestling in at least three matches a night.

Q: But you have shouldered most of the burden as of late, thanks to Owen's chronic knee injury.

A: That shows you why we're on our way to becoming the greatest WWF tag team champions of all-time. Even though one of us is suffering from an injury, we're still able to destroy the competition. Don't worry, Owen's trick knee has been bothering him for years. With a little therapy, he'll be back to his old self.

Q: "Trick knee" seems like a good way to describe it. Some people think he is faking the injury.

A: What? I don't like what you're

implying. This is another example of yellow journalism. You may be new on board, pal, but you're just as biased as most of the other bloody writers who work for that magazine of yours.

Q: But I haven't seen you help Owen back to the locker room too often. You didn't seem entirely convinced about his injury, either, though it has caused you to lose a few times via countout.

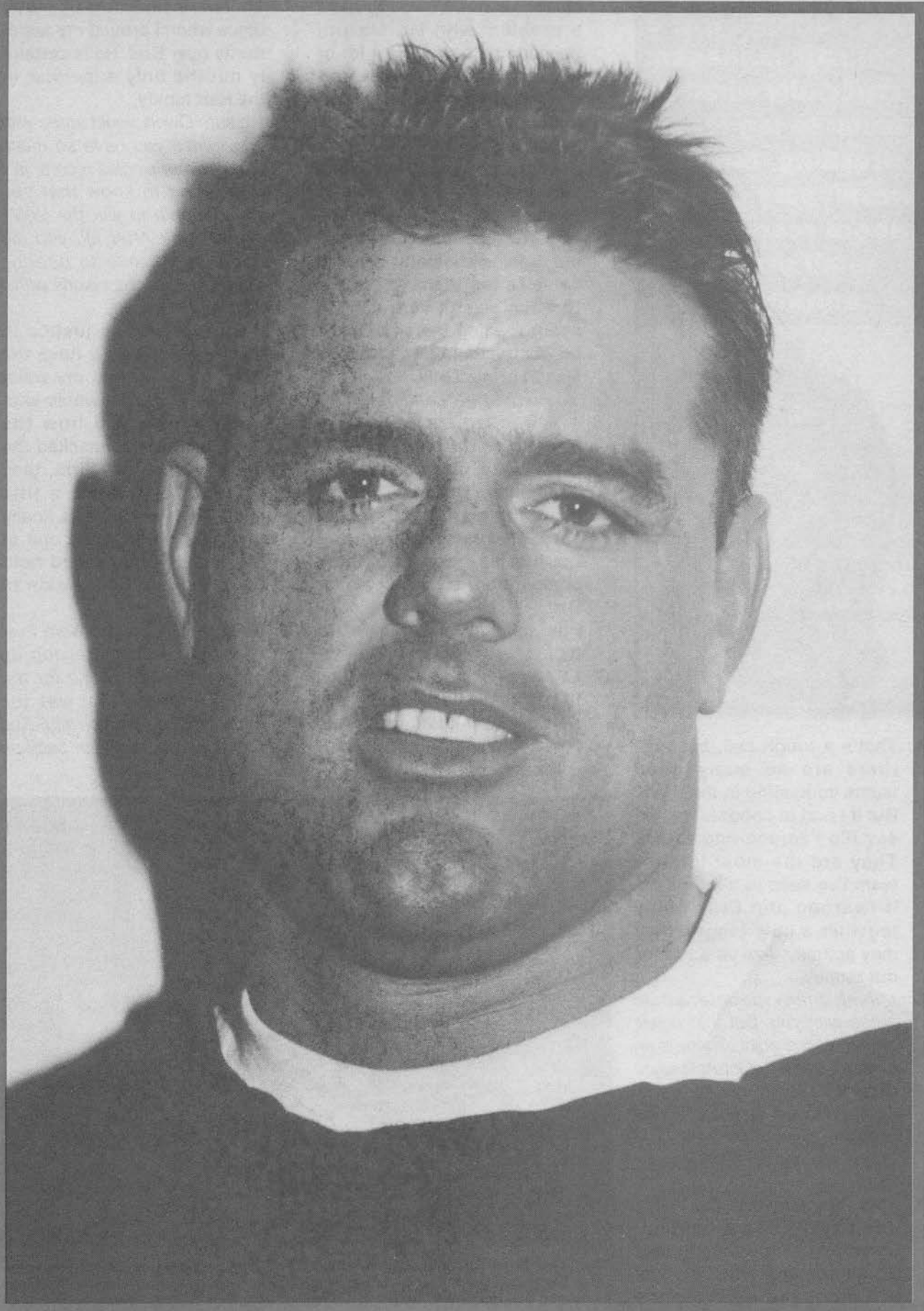
"I bet there are a lot of people, especially a bunch of tag teams in the WWF, who would like to see me and Owen split. It's wishful thinking."

A: The most important thing is that we walked away champions. Sure, I yelled at Owen during the heat of the moment. But that was before I fully understood the nature of his injury.

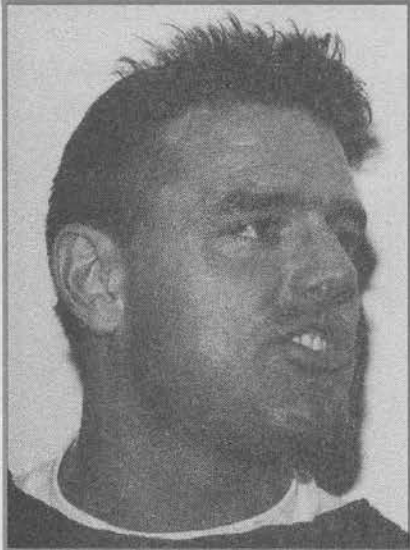
Q: Those arguments led some observers to believe that you and Owen were heading for a breakup. Back at In Your House in February, you were screaming at Owen when he caused you guys to lose by DQ to Furnas and Lafon. You had the match won when he got involved. I thought you two would split up right then.

A: I bet there are a lot of people, especially a bunch of tag teams in the WWF, who would like to see me and Owen split. It's wishful thinking. Sure, Owen and I had a few disagreements, but the tough times made us stronger!

Q: What WWF team has been your stiffest competition so far?



"Jim Cornette was a fantastic manager, especially when it came to tag team wrestling. But Jim wasn't very careful about reading the small print on contracts."



A: That's a tough call, because there are so many good teams competing in the WWF. But if I had to choose, I would say it's Faarooq and Crush. They are the most intense team I've seen in a long time. If Faarooq and Crush stay together a little longer, they may actually give us a run for our money.

Q: I think many people would agree with you. But that raises an interesting point. There is an inherent conflict of interest when Clarence Mason manages you, Owen, and the Nation of Domination. Since Mason is a lawyer, he should already know that.

A: This may surprise you, but I don't really see a conflict. Owen and I are willing to take on all comers, whether they are managed by Clarence

Mason or not. We don't have a problem with Mr. Mason, because he has done a lot of good things for Owen and me. He doesn't interfere in matches, so he isn't really a factor, anyway.

Q: Do you think Jim Cornette held your interests closer to heart when he was managing you?

A: Jim Cornette was a fantastic manager, especially when it came to tag team wrestling. But Jim wasn't very careful about reading the small print on contracts. I think Clarence Mason proved that.

Q: You would be considered an expert in tag team wrestling, too. Do you prefer tag team over singles competition?

A: The "British Bulldog" can mix it up any way that's necessary. My record shows that I'm just as good at singles competition. My victory over Bret Hart for the Intercontinental title is testament to that.

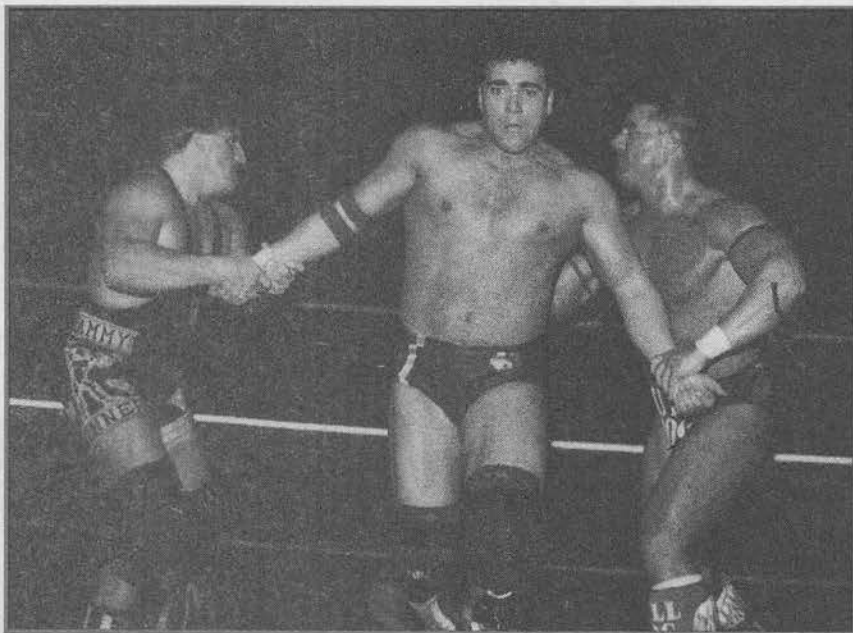
Q: Of course, that was the famous match at Wembley Stadium at SummerSlam '92. It was voted PWI Match of the Year, if I recall correctly.

A: That was just one of many times when I proved my superiority over Bret. He is certainly not the only superstar in the Hart family.

Q: I'm sure Owen would agree with you. Since you have so much pride in your singles record, is it frustrating to know that you were unable to win the WWF World title? After all, you did come very close to beating three different champions within a six-month period.

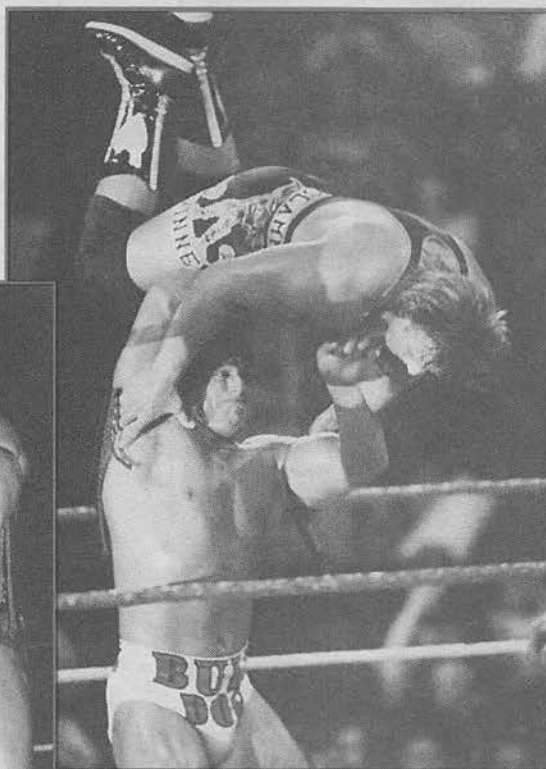
A: If there were any justice in this world, I would have the WWF strap around my waist right now. But the whole situation shows you how the WWF has always stacked the deck against me. First, they refused to give me a title shot. Then, once I was finally given a chance, each one of the champions I faced held on to the belt by the skin of his teeth.

Q: Everyone knows you were frustrated over not receiving an opportunity to wrestle for the title. I suppose that was the main reason why you attacked Diesel and turned your back on your fans.



Owen and Davey Boy double-team Phil Lafon. Surprisingly, Davey Boy doesn't consider Lafon and Doug Furnas to be he and Owen's toughest challengers. He gives the nod to Faarooq and Crush.

Despite all the adversity they've faced, Owen Hart and Davey Boy Smith still have the WWF World tag team belts (below). Smith is not anticipating getting involved in another feud with his brother-in-law anytime soon (right).



A: Who says I turned my back on my fans? Listen, pal, I'm starting to value your opinion even less. Those fans turned their backs on me! They didn't care if I was treated unfairly.

Q: You must have been very pleased when your number-one fan, your wife—Bret and Owen's sister—stood solidly behind you.

A: I was very pleased, especially when she stood behind me during my matches with Bret. I know how important Diana's family is in her life. The Hart family is important to me as well. I was also grateful for Owen's support. But it was certainly time for Bret to be knocked down a notch or two.

Q: It is known that the holiday season of 1995 was not a happy time in the Hart household. Has some of the turmoil within the family subsided?

A: Everyone has enough respect for Stu and Helen not to bring their professional differences to the din-

ner table, if that's what you mean. I don't think Owen and Bret will ever get along, but that is just the way the situation may remain.

Q: But your relationship with Bret seems to be improving. It wasn't long ago that you saved him from an attack by Steve Austin.

A: I helped Bret for a few reasons, none of which included pity. Austin had gotten under my skin for a while, and I didn't like seeing him get the last laugh with someone else. I never said I didn't respect Bret Hart. He didn't deserve to be treated that way.

Q: Bret reciprocated a week or so later, by rescuing you from a similar situation. Will you two continue to help each other?

A: I'm not sure. I think it's best if Bret and I don't cross paths anytime soon. We're not quite ready to become chums again.

Q: Is there any particular reason why Diana doesn't accompany you to ringside anymore?

A: There's a bloody good reason. It's a shame when a lovely, respectful lady like Diana can't escort her husband to ringside for fear of being propositioned by predators like Shawn Michaels. I may not have to worry about Michaels lurking in the shadows anymore, but there are plenty of depraved maniacs like him out there.

Q: Do you most fans in hoping he can rebound from his knee injury?

A: I hate to see any athlete's career end in its prime. Leave it at that.

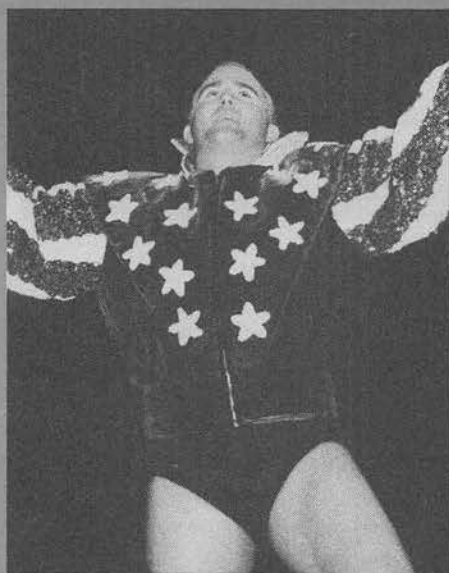
Q: How do you want fans to view Davey Boy Smith?

A: My true fans will view me as a hard worker who never settles for being second best. For those fans, I promise that the best is yet to come. □



"I think it's best if Bret and I don't cross paths anytime soon. We're not quite ready to become chums again."

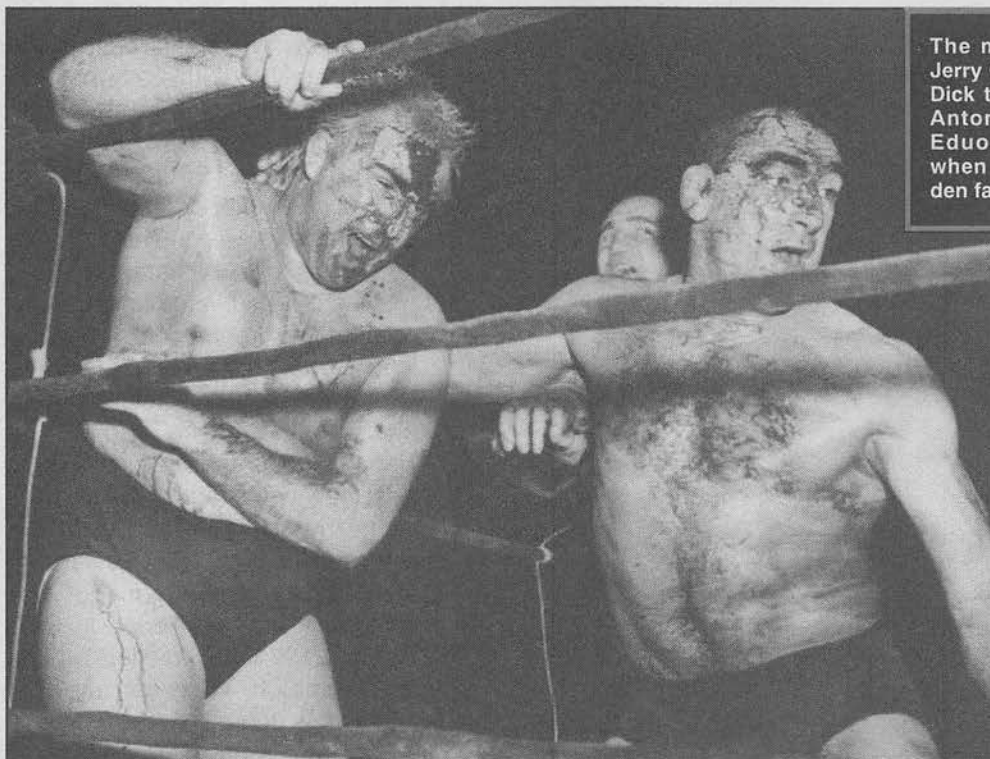
A TRIBUTE TO DR. JERRY GRAHAM



1928-1997

Wrestling lost another legend in January,
when Dr. Jerry Graham died in California.

His tactics were controversial, but he had a passion
for the sport that touched everyone who ever knew him
or saw him compete



The match that started a riot! Jerry Graham (along with partner Dick the Bruiser) were taking on Antonino Rocca (with partner Eduard Carpentier) in 1957 when the Madison Square Garden fans got out of control.

By Steve Anderson

FOR 20 YEARS, from 1957 to 1977, children could not attend wrestling cards in the state of New York. For 20 years, those under 15 had to find less-than-legal ways of getting into Madison Square Garden if they wanted to see wrestling events there. Few knew why there was such a restriction.

Dr. Jerry Graham knew. And until his death at age 68 on January 24, he always viewed it as a source of pride.

The age restriction was put in place by the New York State Athletic Commission following a match on November 19, 1957, in which Graham teamed with Dick the Bruiser against his most hated rival, Antonino Rocca, and Eduard Carpentier. After the popular Rocca and Carpentier won the match by disqualification, Graham and Rocca began to brawl on the ring apron. Graham repeatedly taunted the crowd, prompting a violent reaction. Spectators began fighting among themselves and some

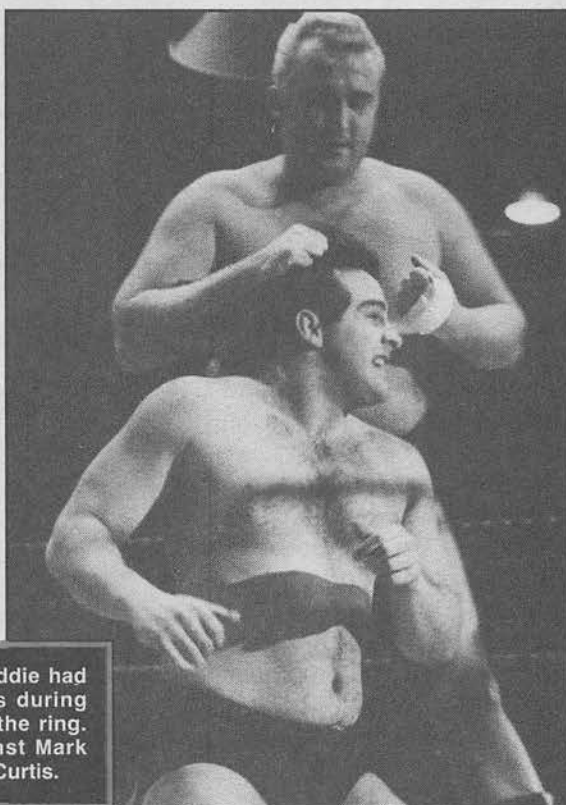
rushed the ring in an attempt to get at Graham and Bruiser, who had to fight their way back to the safety of the dressing room.

The Commission cancelled a card that was scheduled for the Garden 11 days later and warned that if wrestling rules were not obeyed, it might take action that would "endanger the future of wrestling" in New York. The Commission would ultimately fine Graham and Rocca \$1,000 and Bruiser and Carpentier \$500 for their roles in the riot. It also placed into effect the infamous 14 years and older age restriction.

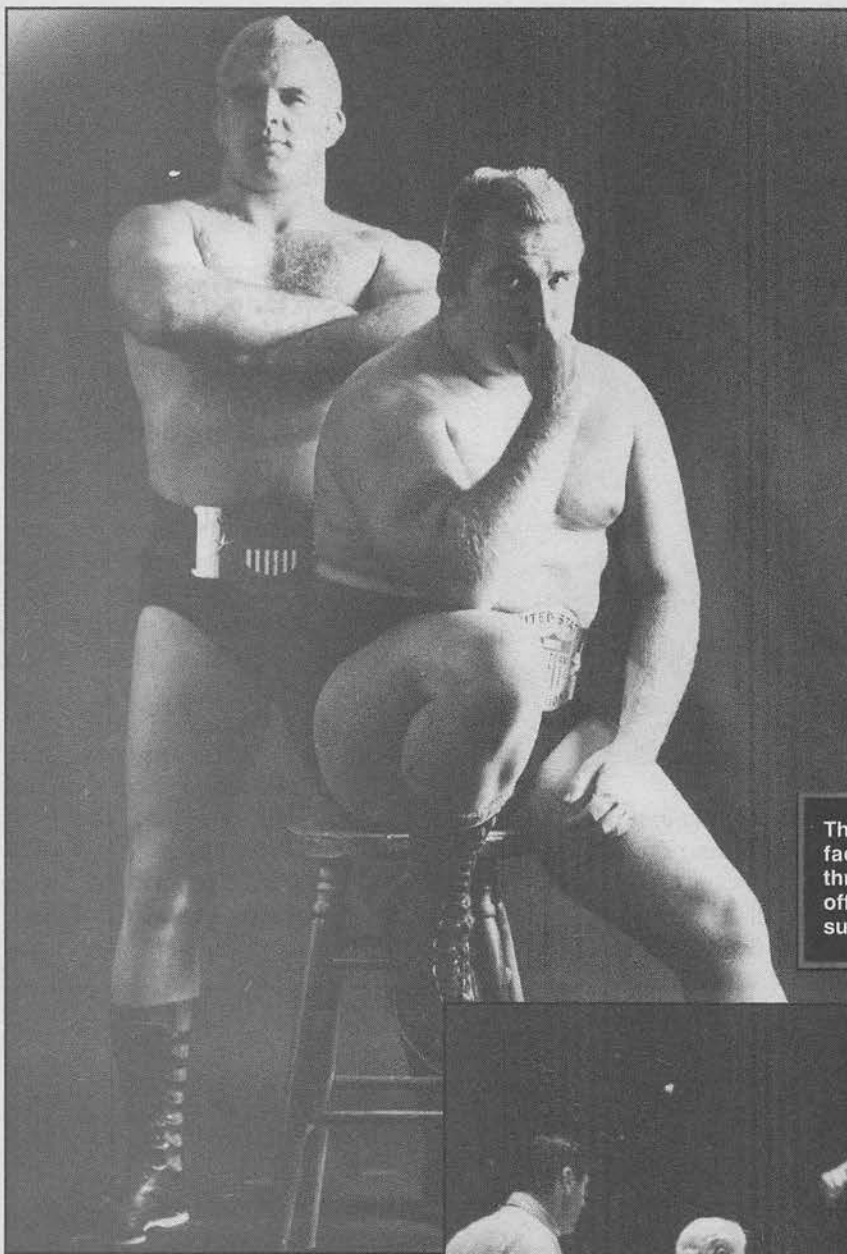
Ironically, Graham

started wrestling at the tender age of ... 14. After training under legendary former World champion Jim Londos, Graham debut against Wild Bill Brooks took place in Aurora, Illinois. He later took a break from the sport because of World War II and so he could attend college, but the call of the ring eventually lured him back.

Jerry and brother Eddie comprised one of the top rulebreaking tag teams of the late-'50s, and they were despised by the masses who attended cards in the Northeast. The Grahams battled most of the



Jerry and his brother Eddie had many memorable feuds during their years together in the ring. One of them was against Mark Lewin (shown) and Don Curtis.



yet another tag title in 1964.

Graham was at his best in the mid-to-late-1960s. He attempted a wrestling comeback in 1975 with the WWF, but he wasn't the same. In the early-1980s, Graham served as a color commentator for a wrestling television show in California. His style was abrasive, and he was clearly biased toward rule-breakers. Promoters didn't particularly like this, so he didn't last that long. Little did they know that men like Jesse Ventura and Bobby Heenan would make the style chic just a few years later.

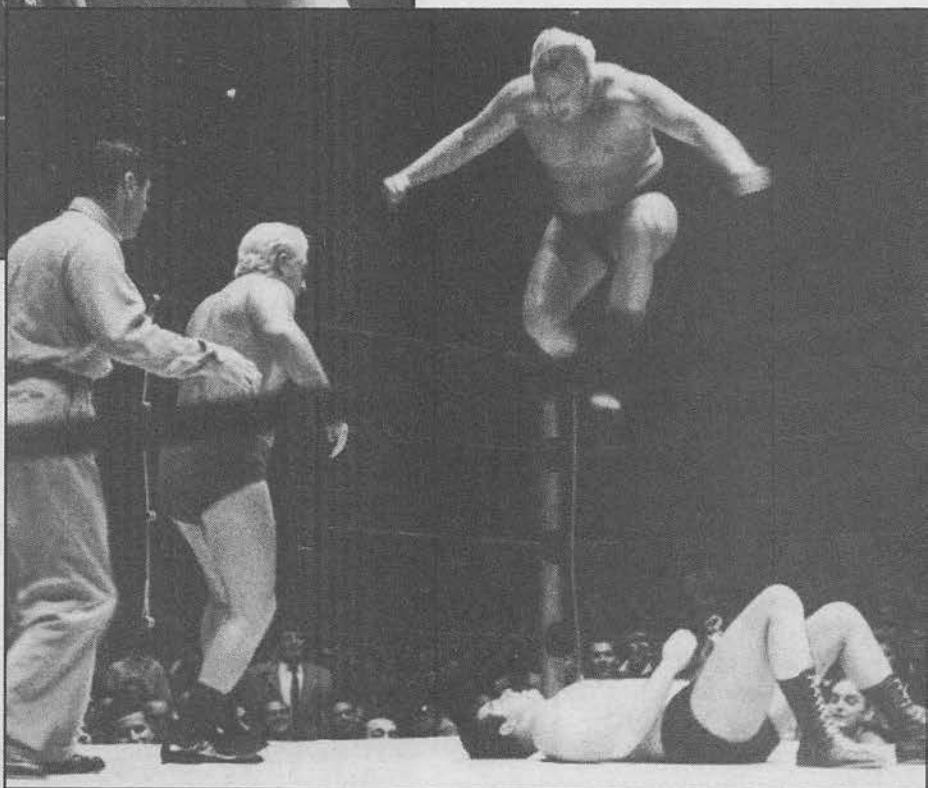
In the mid-1980s, Graham returned to the WWF yet again, this time as a manager. But that comeback also was brief. In California in 1991, he wrestled his last official match, 48 years after his auspicious debut.

Graham suffered a stroke on

The Grahams were always very proud of the fact that they won the U.S. tag team title three times, and they always liked showing off the belts (left). They liked punishing men such as Lewin even more (below).

top tag teams of the time, including the Bastien Brothers, Fabulous Kangaroos, Mark Lewin and Don Curtis, and Rocca and Miguel Perez.

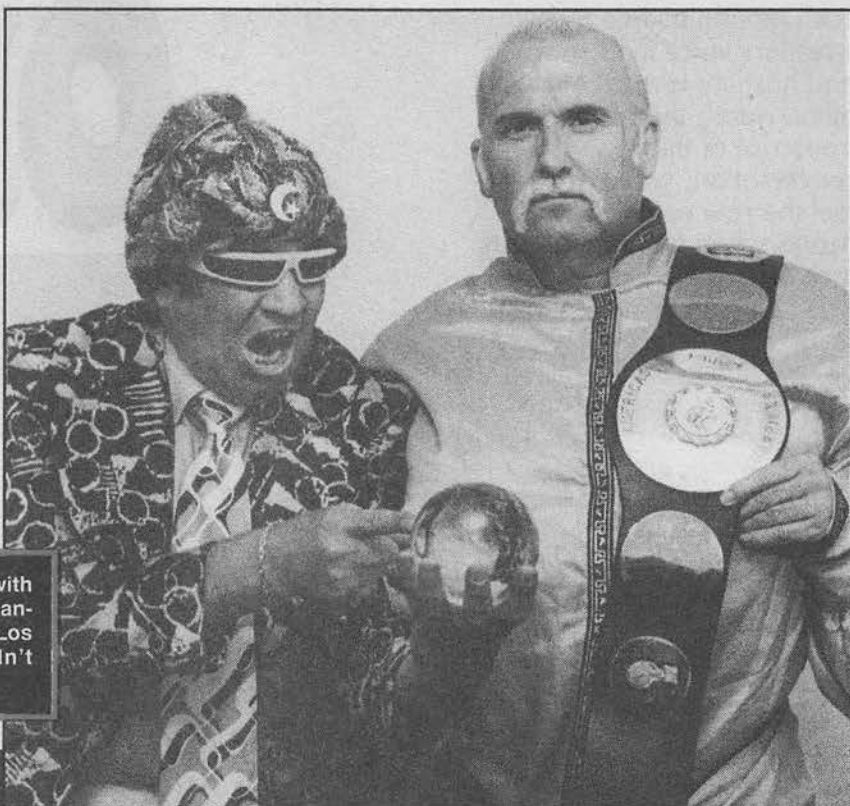
In 1956, he formed a partnership that would forever distinguish his career. He and Eddie formed the team known as The Golden Grahams. In 1957, the Grahams captured their first of three U.S. tag team titles, the championship that would evolve into the WWF World tag team title. A second version of The Golden Grahams, with "Crazy" Luke replacing Eddie, won



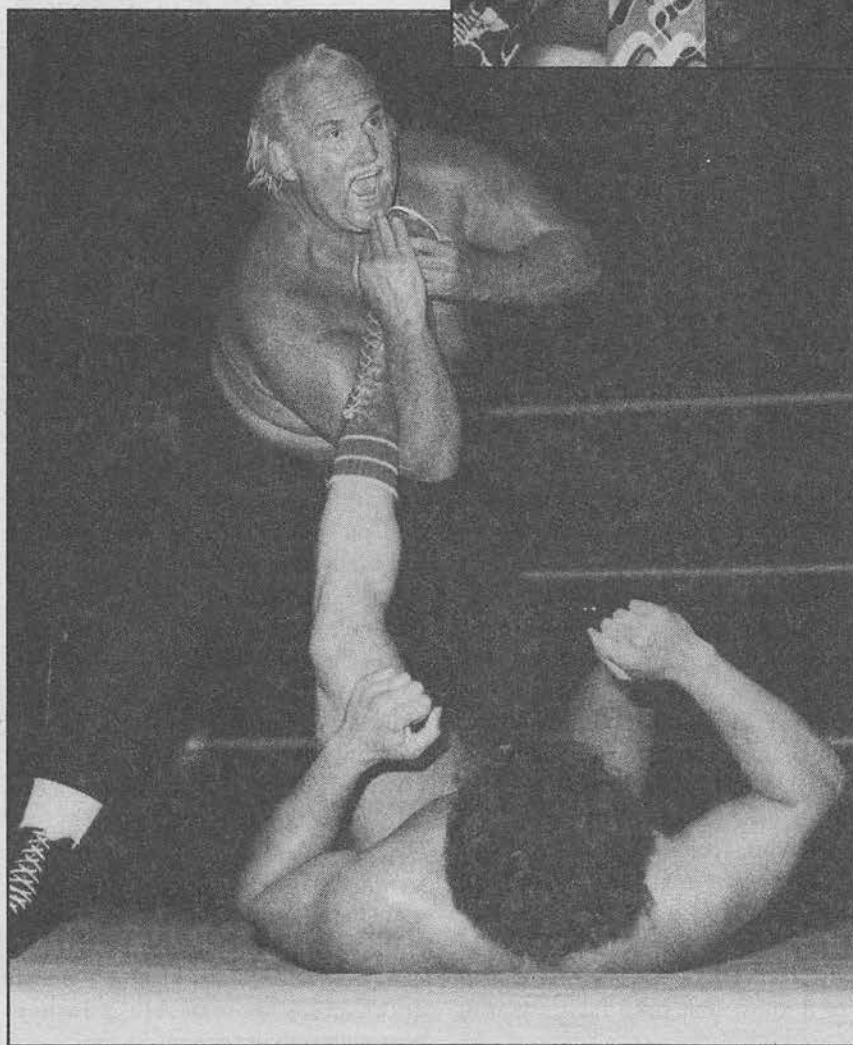
December 15, one day before his 68th birthday. Only semiconscious, he was later transferred to a convalescent home in Glendale, California, where he died the following morning.

Despite his stellar career, Graham will be remembered for much more than his ring accomplishments. The Garden riot was a turning point in the sport's history, but it was another event that better defined the rather bizarre character of the man.

On August 16, 1969, Graham went berserk after learning that



Late in his career, Graham hooked up with The Grand Wizard (right), who was his manager when he battled Mickey Doyle in Los Angeles in 1975 (below). Graham didn't wrestle his final match until 1991.



his mother had died at a hospital in Phoenix. Accompanied by his 11-year-old son and armed with an eight-inch hunting knife, a .38-caliber pistol, and a shotgun, Graham attempted to remove his mother's body from the hospital. "Leave me alone," he said. "I just want to bury her."

Graham pushed a nurse and fired a shot in the direction of a doctor before reaching the stretcher where his mother lay. He grabbed hold of his mother, but was met by a security guard at the hospital door. "He threw me across the hallway like I was a potato chip," Ed Boerkel told United Press International.

With his mother draped over his shoulder, Graham dragged Boerkel into the parking lot, where he was met by police. He was booked on felony charges of assault with a deadly weapon and aggravated assault, plus a misdemeanor charge of carrying a concealed weapon.

Rulebreaker? He defined the word! □

The telephone wires sizzle each month, as two top wrestlers voice their rage and hostility toward each other. Here's the unedited transcript of their conversation, your chance to feel the raw emotion that results when two antagonists face off ... One On One

WHILE WCW LAMENTS the interference of women in what is supposed to be a man's sport, ECW revels in it. After all, the women of ECW don't just argue, pull hair, and engage in minor skirmishes. These ladies, namely Beulah McGillicutty and Francine, are right there in the trenches. They'll fight with each other and, if necessary, they'll fight each other's men.

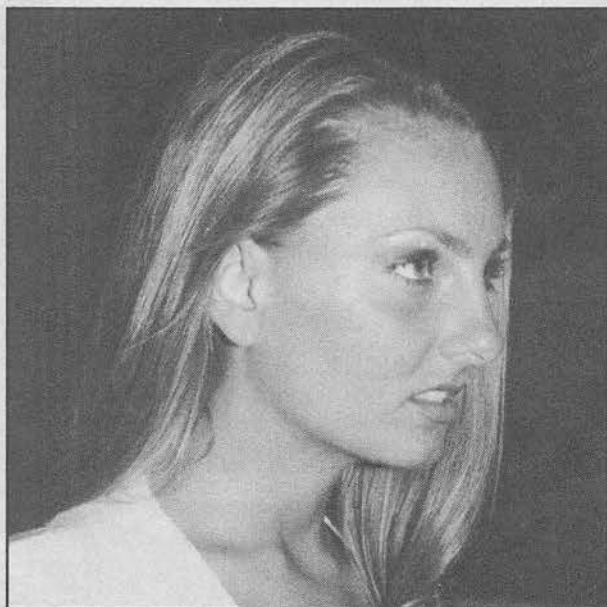
Beulah and Francine can be tough and independent, but they're also loyal to their men, Tommy Dreamer and Shane Douglas, respectively, and very beautiful. They're certainly not ashamed of showing off their bodies! And they'll put those bodies on the line night after night at ECW events. Friends? Hardly. They once were able to peacefully co-exist, but only for a brief period of time. They're serious enemies now.

Let's just look at some of the things that have happened to these two beauties during the last year or two: Beulah as been piledriven (repeatedly, by Dreamer), belly-to-belly suplexed (by Douglas), body-slammed (by several people), and hit with a few foreign objects (by Francine); Francine has been piledriven (by Dreamer), super-bombed (by The Pit Bulls), spanked (by ECW's mysterious masked man), and moonsaulted (by Beulah).

And remember—these two women don't even consider themselves wrestlers.

ECW fans would love to see Beulah and Francine battle each other (wo)mano a (wo)mano in the ring, but for now, we'll just have to be content to let them go at it over the telephone ... "One On One."

ONE ON ONE



"Why don't they just put up a cage to see if you have the guts to get in the ring with me alone, without that freak of a boyfriend that you have?"

—Beulah McGillicutty

FRANCINE: What is this, Beulah? A war of words? I hardly think you're capable.

BEULAH: Well that's all you are, Francine, talk. You shoot your mouth off, but when you're in the ring with me, you try to run and hide.

FRANCINE: Excuse me? I run and hide? You're always hiding behind that idiot Tommy Dreamer. I don't know why you bother. I'll always be able to catch up with you. That is, until you find a real man.

BEULAH: Real man? What's that supposed to mean?

FRANCINE: You know what that means. A real man like Shane Douglas. But don't worry, I'm enough woman for him.

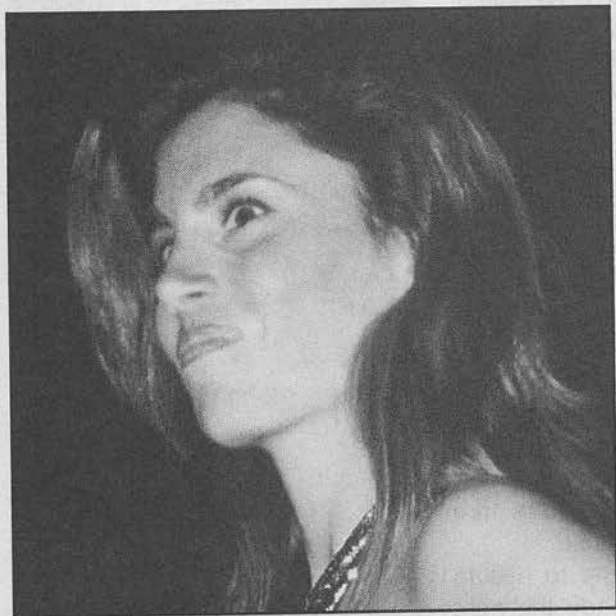
BEULAH: If you're referring to size, I know that from facing you in the ring.

FRANCINE: Don't give me another reason to kick you around. You and that loser of a boyfriend that you have.

BEULAH: Tommy will stand up and fight whenever someone calls him out. A real man knows how to treat a woman, too. All Shane does is hide behind you and the other two members of his Triple Threat, Chris Candido and Brian Lee.

FRANCINE: Excuse me? Tommy Dreamer knows how to treat a woman? Let me get this straight. Dreamer, the guy who piledrived you like a million times a few years ago, *knows how to treat a woman*? Have you seen what your man has done to me? I've got the chiropractor bills to prove it. Some man that he is—picking on a poor, defenseless woman. He'd rather beat me up than take on Shane.

N ONE



"When you get in the ring with me, I'm a wild animal, but the difference between us is I can wrestle. I was trained by the best, Shane Douglas."

—Francine

BEULAH: Oh, you've really lost it. You know that, in that ring, everything is fair game. You get in Tommy's face and he'll do what he has to do to you. I won't stop him. If I have to go through Shane to get to you, that's the chance that I'm willing to take. And anything Shane can dish out, I can take.

FRANCINE: All this talk won't protect you from Shane or me.

BEULAH: I've seen Shane Douglas' preference in opponents. Women and wrestlers with neck injuries. What next? The elderly? Small children? Household pets?

FRANCINE: Shane is the greatest wrestler in ECW today. He is the World TV champion. Anyone who represents a threat to that will go down. When you enter our war zone, you better be ready for battle.

BEULAH: If he's so great, why

won't he put that title up against Tommy?

FRANCINE: Shane is focusing all his energy on The Pit Bulls. Shane is a disciplined athlete. When he is finishing crippling both those mangy mutts, maybe we'll lower ourselves and get in the ring with that freak again.

BEULAH: I doubt if Shane'll get past either Pit Bull. And he fears Tommy. You know it, and I know it.

FRANCINE: Let's cut the crap. This is about you and me. You're pining away for Shane. You can't stand it when you see his arms wrapped around me.

BEULAH: I don't give a damn about Shane. Shane is a lowlife who brings people like you down to his level. With Tommy, I'm a free woman.

FRANCINE: Every time you see me and Shane, your eyes get green with jealousy, honey.

BEULAH: Let's just keep the men out of this. Let's you and I settle this once and for all the way everyone settles things in ECW. Let's get between the ropes and may the better woman win.

FRANCINE: And you better believe that the better woman is me. Just listen to the fans when I'm in the ring. They know a beautiful woman when they see one.

BEULAH: Well, they're not seeing it with you. Did you forget some of the things they've chanted at you? Don't worry, I won't repeat them. I know how crazy you get when they get on you and don't stop. They know there is only one real woman in ECW.

FRANCINE: Then what are we waiting for? Why don't they just put up a cage to see if you have the guts to get in the ring with me alone?

BEULAH: Fine. I'll make that horse face of yours uglier than it already is.

FRANCINE: With what? Your great wrestling talent? There is something that you need to understand. When you get in the ring with me, I'm a wild animal, but the difference between us is I can wrestle. I was trained by the best, Shane Douglas.

BEULAH: He might have taught you how to cheat, but there isn't much he could teach you about wrestling or about getting extreme. You know that the ECW fans consider Tommy the most extreme of all the wrestlers in ECW.

FRANCINE: Dreamer's the most extreme? The fans didn't see extreme until Shane came along. He showed them extreme and they turned away in disgust.

BEULAH: Shane has taken things too far one too many times.

FRANCINE: But that's what extreme is all about.

BEULAH: You're wrong. I'll show you what extreme is all about. You'll see. □

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Sincerely Yours

(Continued from page 5)

DEFINITE THREAT

I agree that Flash Funk is a legitimate threat to all WWF superstars ("Party-Hearty Flash Funk: Don't Be Fooled—He's A Serious Threat!" April 1997). Flash has improved a great deal since joining the promotion last November and has been impressive in his matches with Leif Cassidy and Savio Vega. Funk has dazzled both the wrestlers and fans with aerial acrobatics and fine mat wrestling.

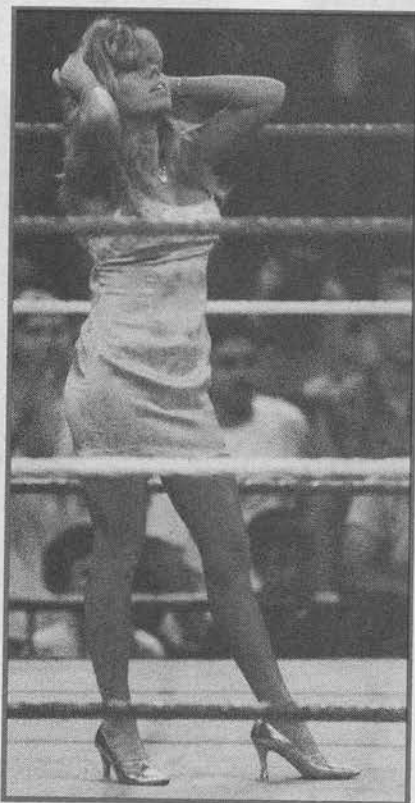
Flash did not win the ECW TV title and the WCW World tag team title by beating no-name wrestlers. He has beaten the likes of Dean Malenko and Eddy Guerrero, so I think he can handle guys like Steve Austin and Goldust.

This is Flash's time to rise to superstardom. He made the right choice joining the WWF because the WWF will allow him to showcase his talent to a worldwide audience. He has become a more dedicated wrestler and less arrogant in the last few months. The whole dancing routine with the women is an excellent facade, because he makes it look like he doesn't care much about wrestling, but once he gets in the ring, it is a different story.

CAROL HARVEY
Buffalo, NY

HUNTER OR HUNTED?

I think Hunter Hearst Helmsley is really a pawn in a game that is being played by two intelligent and beautiful women ("Is Helmsley For Real? 'Marlena & Sable Are Begging Me To Steal Them!'" April 1997). I actually feel sorry for the former Intercontinental champ. He is allowing his ego to get him involved in a potentially career-ending triangle feud. Helmsley will not be able to withstand the punishment that Goldust and Marc



This is one woman Hunter Hearst Helmsley has had his eye on for quite a while. Some would say he's obsessed with Marlena. But reader Alexander Johnson thinks *she's* playing mind games with *him*.

Mero will be dishing out. Goldust is a strange person, and no one knows what he will do. He has played with the minds of Ahmed Johnson and Scott "Razor Ramon" Hall and has done some major damage.

Helmsley should put his ego in check for his own good. He must realize he can get any women he wants, so he should forget about chasing Marlena. She is just using him as a motivational tool for Goldust. Once Goldust gets done with Helmsley, he most likely will begin to gear up for a major title run. Helmsley has to open his eyes or he will end up being stuck in a meaningless feud.

ALEXANDER JOHNSON
Crystal Falls, WI □



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On The Road

(Continued from page 10)

ferent from what I experienced at the other three cards. In Morristown, I saw men carrying their sons on their shoulders and families driving up to the arena in pickup trucks. In Chattanooga, I saw students and yuppies, families with grown children, and plenty of Lexuses and Infinities. Different scene, different kind of card.

In the main event, Bret Hart, Steve Austin, The Undertaker, and Big Van Vader battled for the WWF World title that was vacated by the injured Shawn Michaels a few days earlier. For three nights, I had seen fans sitting back for an evening of wrestling entertainment. On this night, the card was

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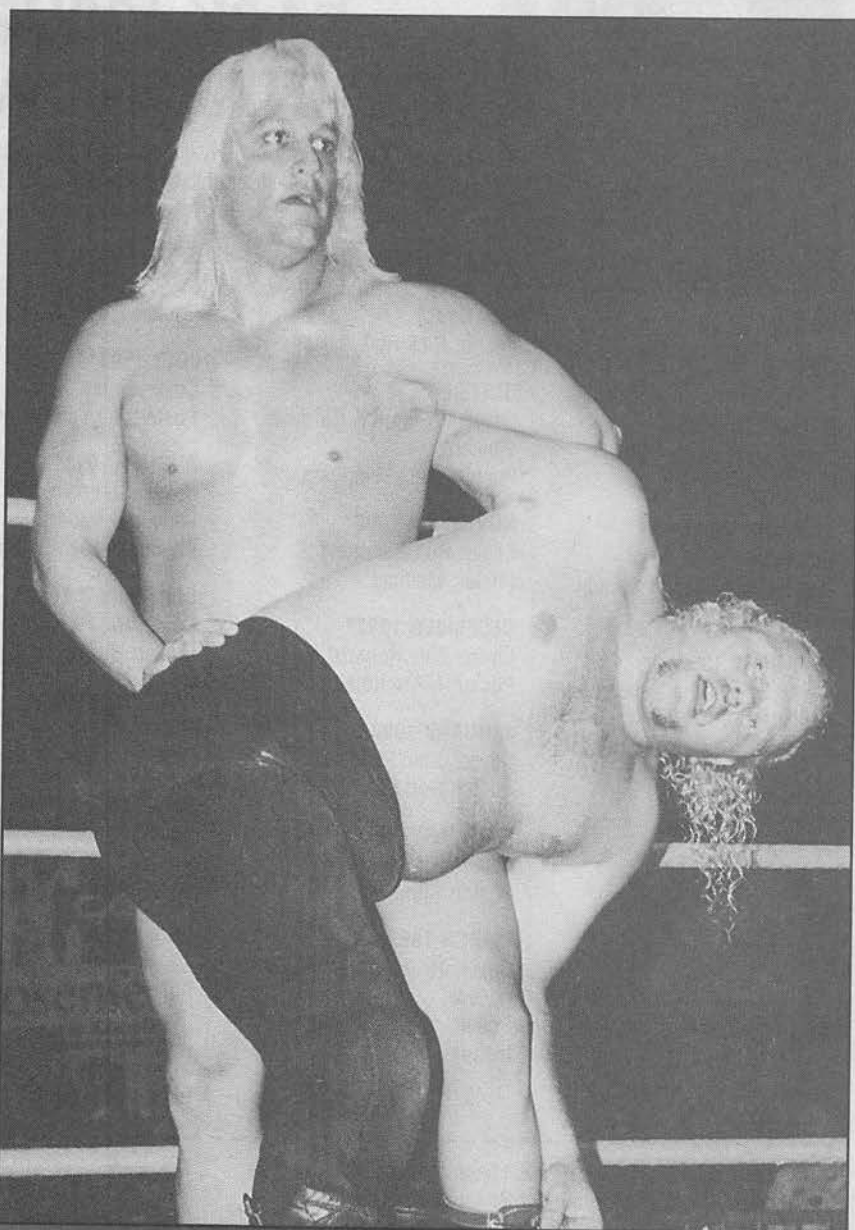
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The old Smoky Mountain Wrestling feud between Buddy Landell and "Dirty White Boy" Tony Anthony got heated up again on Tennessee Mountain Wrestling card. But it was the "Dirty White Girl" who was the big winner this time.

tense. Something real was at stake: the major title of one of the two biggest federations in North America.

Was there a lesson to be learned from this? Anything to be gained? Not really. Different scenes, different crowds, and different types of wrestling. Ten-

nessee remains one of the best states for wrestling, a good place to spend five or six days in the middle of February, and the answer to at least one important wrestling question: Are the independents dead? No, and they make a nice appetizer for a delicious main course. □

This Month In...

THE Wrestler

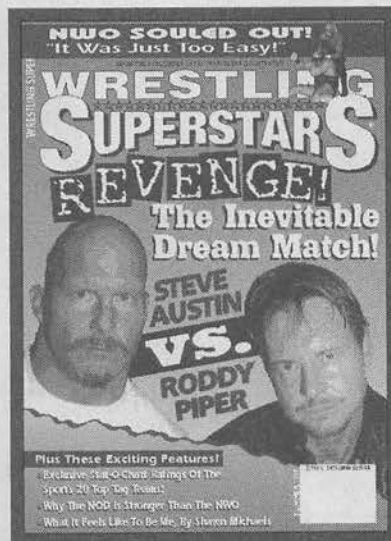


You'd think that by now, **SHAWN MICHAELS** and "**PSYCHO**" **SID** would hate each other as much as Shawn and **BRET HART** hate each other, but that's not the case. Sid has been going after Bret full-bore lately; it's as if he's pounding the "Hitman" on behalf of his old "friend" ... **THE GIANT** was very down after he got spray-painted at Souled Out. He had better be ready to keep fighting the NWO; the future of WCW depends on *him*! ... You won't want to miss our special 25-page section: "Superstar Wrestlers' Toughest Opponents." Some of our choices will surprise you!

All this—and much more!—
in the June 1997 issue of
The Wrestler

NOW ON

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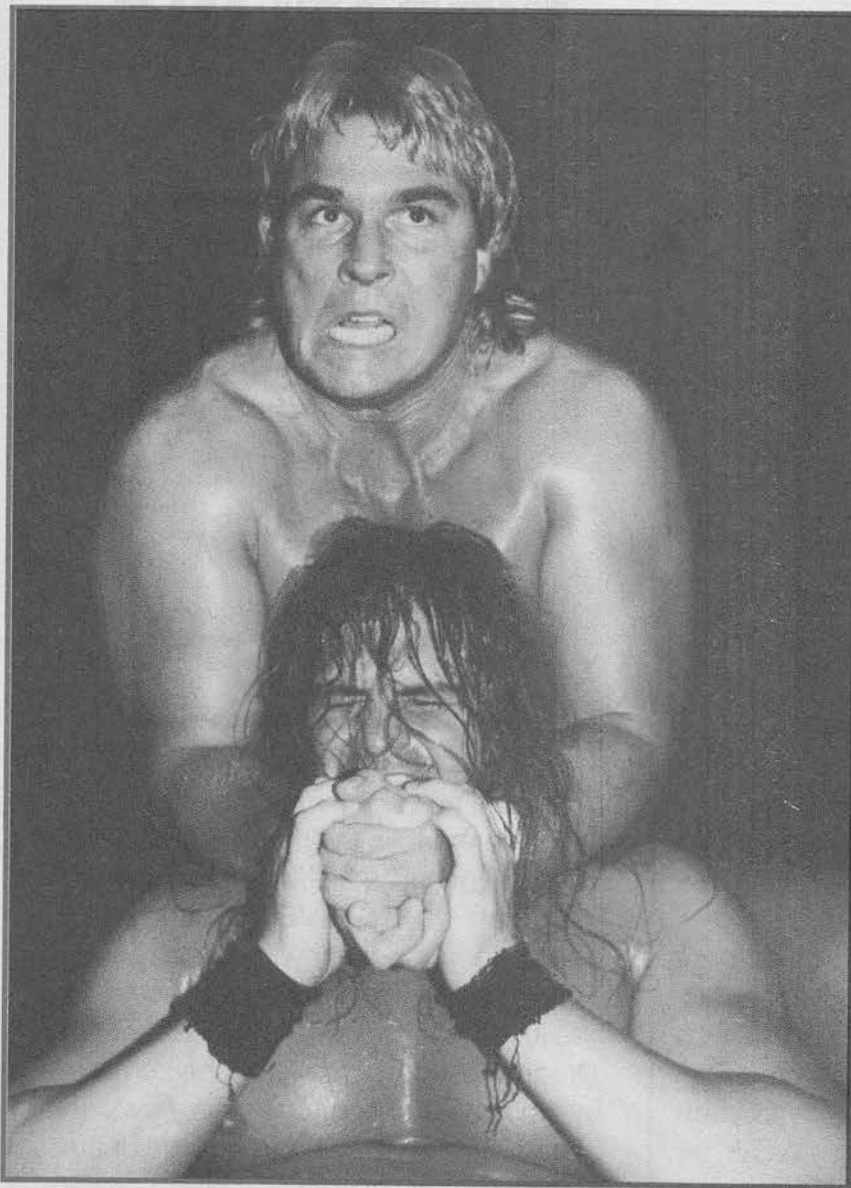
They are two of the more colorful rebels we've ever seen in the ring. **RODDY PIPER** has been raising hell for more than two decades, while **STEVE AUSTIN** is now considered by many to be the most dangerous man in the sport. You won't believe what happens in our "Superstar Dream Match" ... You might be surprised by who came out on top in this year's Tag Team Stat-O-Charts, our ranking of the top 20 duos in the sport ... Some people didn't like NWO Souled Out, but the NWO thought it was the best pay-per-view ever. What made them say, "It was just too easy"?

All this—and much more!—
in the Summer 1997 issue of
Wrestling Superstars

NOW ON

Behind the Door

(Continued from page 12)



Terry Taylor came out of retirement this winter and battled The Renegade on a WCW card. He said after the match he wants to stay in shape in case he's needed in WCW's war with the NWO. He sounded serious, too. Really.

under. Hogan, Nash, Hall, especially Bischoff ... send them all off to wrestling hell (Puerto Rico?). Make sure it happens before they overrun the WWF, too. Things are way out of control in WCW. It's time to cut the videotape.

Laughable quote of the year: "This NWO has gotten me so worked up that I feel like I have

to get back into top form so I can lend support to WCW if they need me."

Sounds like the kind of quote that should have the NWO members shaking in their wrestling boots, right?

Well, not if you consider that the man being quoted is Terry Taylor, a.k.a. The Red Rooster. In case you missed it, Taylor,

who works as a trainer at WCW's Power Plant these days, came out of retirement for a few matches recently.

Yeah, right. Terry Taylor's going to do what half of WCW couldn't. That'll be the coldest day in hell.

A suggestion to Taylor: Retire and avoid embarrassment.

This is another example of what I call, "I've gotten better since I retired" syndrome. It's a variation of "absence makes the heart grow fonder." An athlete retires and we remember him as being better than he really was.

Now make no mistake: Terry Taylor was a good wrestler, but he was never an outstanding wrestler, and certainly not the kind of man who could take on an entire clique, much less one consisting of half the wrestlers in a federation.

Know what I think?

I think Terry Taylor wants to become a member of the NWO as a wrestler, manager, or adviser. He's going to back-door it, make himself known again, and wait for an invitation.

To which Eric Bischoff said: "Terry Taylor? Don't make me laugh."

Okay, forget for a moment that Eric Bischoff makes us laugh every time we see him on TV. Bischoff is wrestling's Joker. A complete waste of time, space, and energy. On his best day, he wasn't half the man Terry Taylor is today.

Yet, you have to agree: Terry Taylor? Don't make me laugh.

Anyway, here's some food for thought: Dennis Rodman will become an honorary member of the NWO before the end of 1997.

Green hair and all. □

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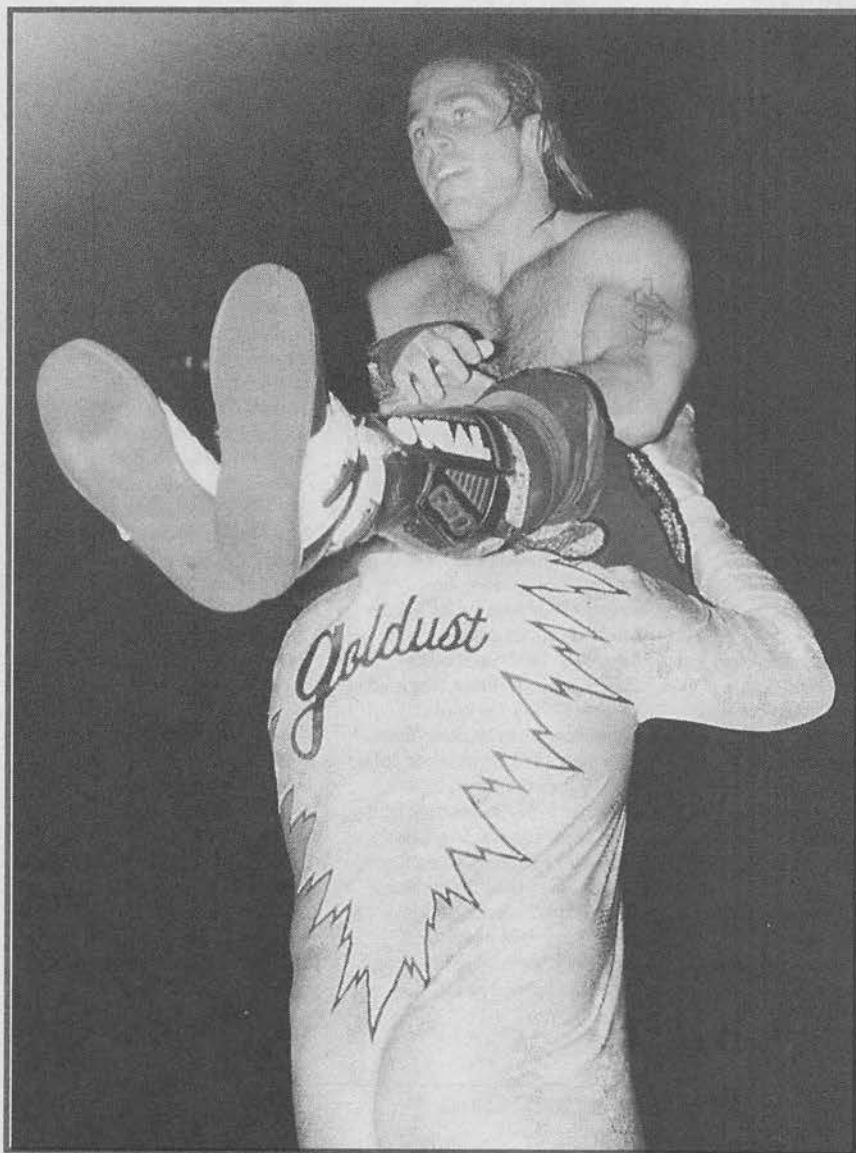
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| <input type="checkbox"/> OCT 89 | <input type="checkbox"/> OCT 91 | <input type="checkbox"/> JUN 94 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DEC 89 | <input type="checkbox"/> NOV 91 | <input type="checkbox"/> AUG 94 | |

The Insider

(Continued from page 14)



As great as Shawn Michaels is at executing high-risk moves like this one he used on Goldust, he's even better at promoting himself, making himself look more courageous and determined than he truly is. What a phony.

Was it fear of facing Sid on that very night? Was the inevitable clash with Bret Hart too hot for Michaels to handle? Were the boos from the fans chipping away at his mighty ego? Or was it strictly a business decision?

With all the defections to WCW/NWO occurring over the past year, anytime anyone changes his status in the WWF,

rumors begin to fly. Michaels' friendship with Kevin Nash and Scott Hall is not a big secret. So is Michaels goldbricking for Ted Turner's gold down in Atlanta?

Questions, questions. Too many questions. My asking all these questions might give you the idea that I give a rip about Shawn Michaels. I don't. Frankly, I am so happy with his departure that I must know the real reason

just in case he returns and I want to plant the seeds for another departure. That is my chief motivation for this inquiry.

While all the pre-pubescent females may squeal with teen delight when Michaels shakes his rear, I merely yawn. Now that he is gone, wrestling has room for more real men. Masculine types like Kevin Nash and The Undertaker. Men who when they enter the ring don't need to wiggle around like a constipated Chippendale. They go in, kick butt, get out, and, in the process, bring out the feminine wiles in me.

So I do not say goodbye to Shawn Michaels. I say good riddance. For whatever reason you left. I don't really care. You left, that's all that counts. For all the youngins who are shedding tears over his departure, save it. He will be back. The massive ego in that minuscule frame will not allow him to shy away from any spotlight for too long.

Michaels' sabbatical is my vacation. An escape away from false humility. The guy sheds a tear and wipes it dry while flexing what he calls muscles. Without Michaels, wrestling will continue to be great, if not greater. We can try to forget we had a WWF World champ named Shawn Michaels.

There. He's down, and I kicked him. He has said that he is gone, so I will treat him as a non-person. No longer will I rail on him. That is, until he prances his way back into my wrestling life. When Shawn Michaels does that, I will reach for my pen and start all over again.

I never thought of that. You know, in a way, I can't wait. In fact, forget what I just said.

Hurry back, "Heartbreak Kid." □

On Assignment

(Continued from page 16)

would you like to talk to me about this time?"

"I think you know," I responded. "What's up your crown when it comes to ECW?"

"Look, I've had enough of those misfits and their fans," said Lawler. "I said what needed to be said."

"But I thought the ECW conflict had calmed down months ago, after they stopped showing up at WWF events."

"But they still maintain a presence in this promotion," responded Lawler. "Their inbred fans carry signs and chant, 'ECW! ECW!' I've had enough, and I wanted to call them out so we can shut those idiots up. I'm the only one who had the guts to do it."

For the record, Lawler was speaking for himself when he publicly "called out" ECW. While no one in the WWF asked him to do this, Lawler is one of the federation's most visible employees. If ECW attacks, most wrestlers in the WWF will side with the makeshift monarch.

But with Lawler, there is always an ulterior motive. Could it be that "The King" of the WWF was also looking out for his true home promotion, the USWA?

"Listen, Hunter, I've spent years making the USWA what it is today," he said. "All I hear is how great ECW is because their guys spill buckets of blood. Everybody there is so *extreme*."

"The USWA was around *long* before ECW got started, and before long, everybody will forget

ECW even existed," he continued. "I don't need some renegade group giving this sport that I love a black eye. I called them out on a WWF show to get attention and

over four years ago to come here," he said. "I have enough loyalty in me for two promotions. People might not believe it, but I care about the WWF. I take my job very seriously. Maybe I want to fight ECW on two different fronts."

Lawler seems to be fighting for the WWF, USWA, and wrestling as a whole. But let's remember that we are talking about "The King" here. Before we deem him a champion of all that is pure in wrestling, we must consider the possibility that there is an entirely different agenda at work here. After all, that particular *Raw* was, for a time, Bret Hart's night. Did Lawler want to steal that spotlight away?

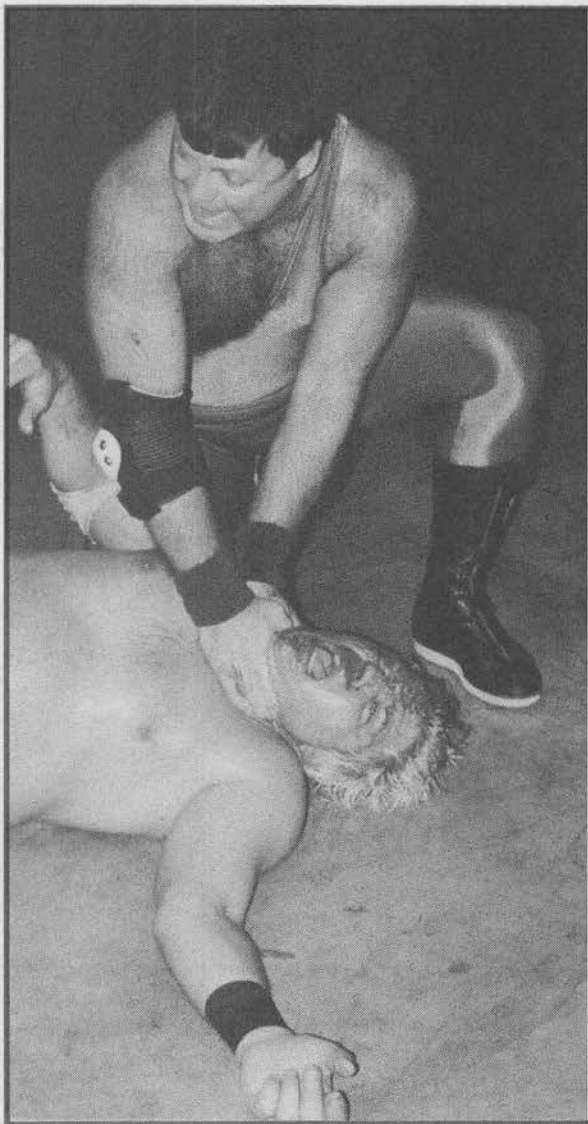
"You're really reaching, Hunter," Lawler said. "Sid took care of 'the Hitman's' special night. I was sending a message. I'm the new garbage man of wrestling, and I'm going to start cleaning up, starting with the trash in ECW."

Call it old school vs. new school. Call it tradition against a new style. Whatever you call it, once again, Jerry Lawler has stirred up controversy, and he could not contain his enthusiasm over it.

"It's like waiting for Santa Claus on Christmas morning," he said. "When those reprobates and mutants

show their ugly faces, it will be my pleasure to put them in their place."

Ironically, Jerry Lawler is making wrestling history by trying to preserve it. □



Lawler chokes a bloody Tommy Rich during a USWA match. Though the Memphis-based federation is considered to be Lawler's "home" promotion, he is very loyal to the WWF, too.

show the world what a bunch of morons they are."

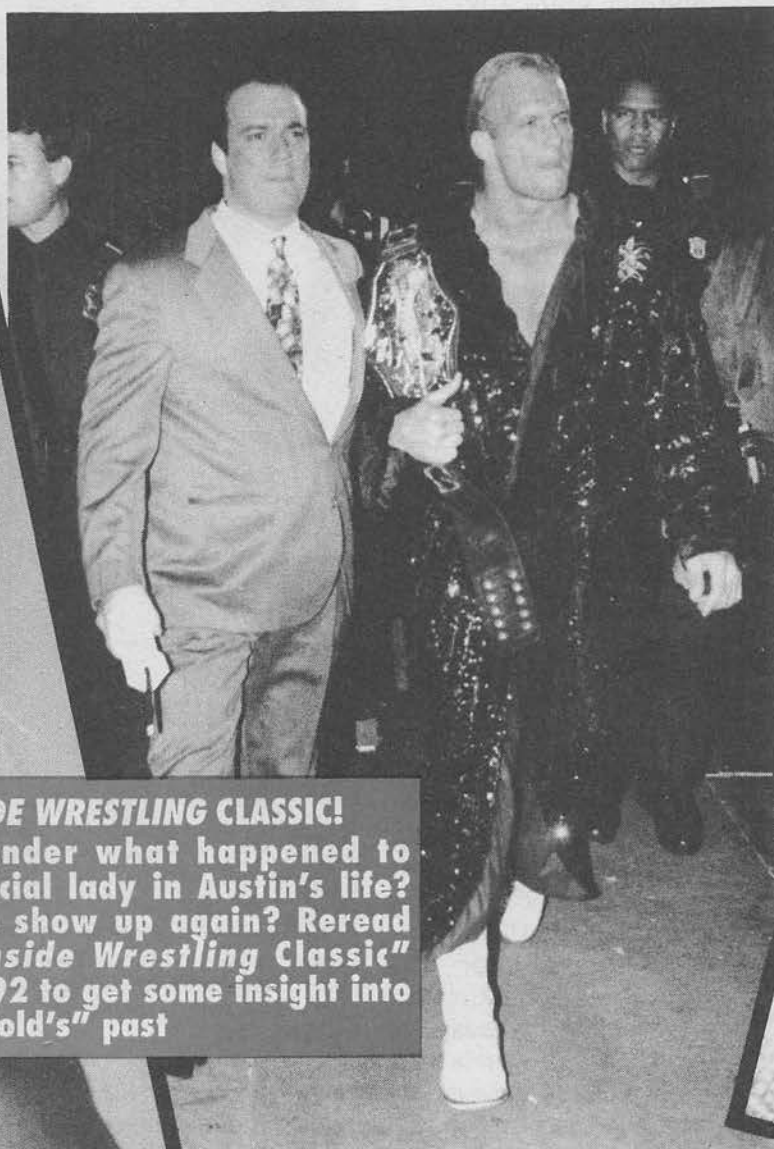
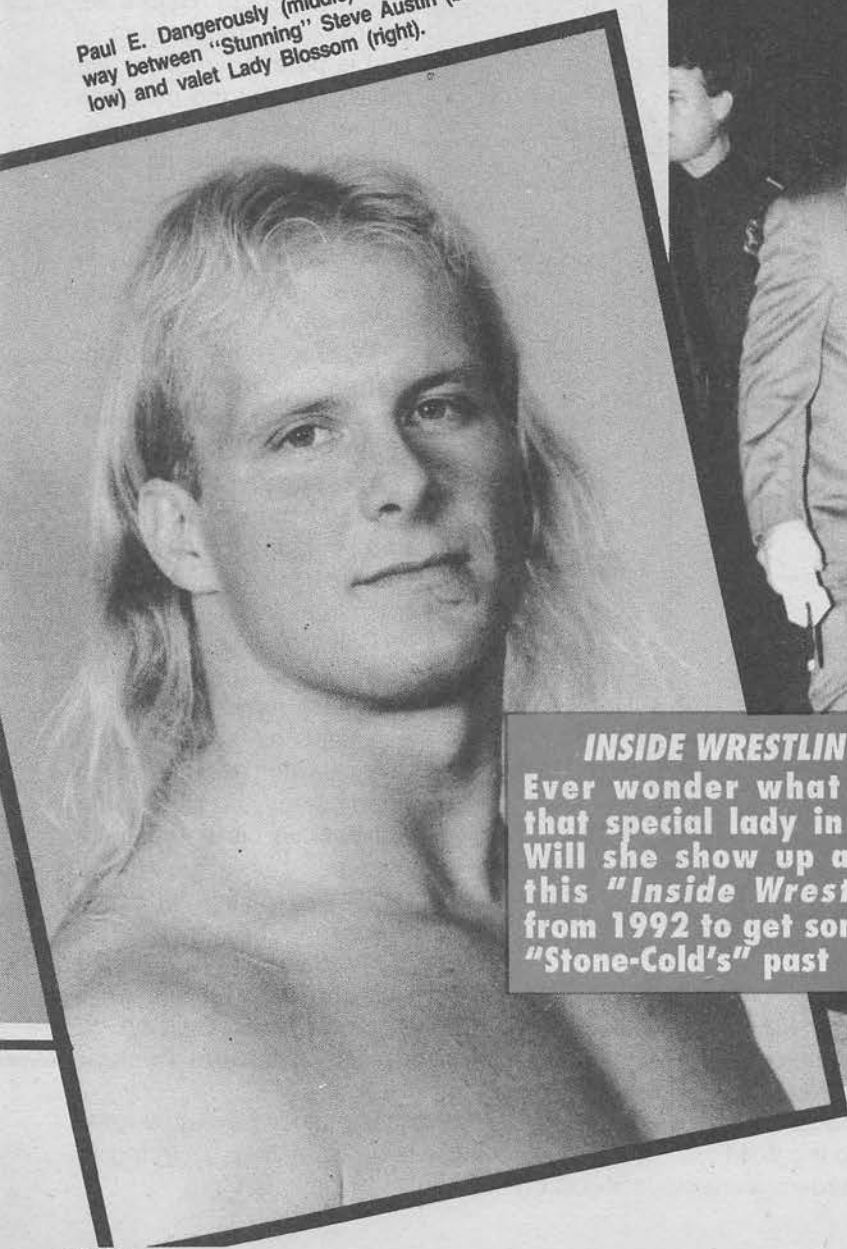
However, that does not mean that Lawler doesn't also have loyalties to the WWF.

"I made a conscious decision

Now It Can Be Told

THE TRUE STORY THE STEVE AUSTIN-LADY

Paul E. Dangerously (middle) wedged his way between "Stunning" Steve Austin (below) and valet Lady Blossom (right).



INSIDE WRESTLING CLASSIC!

Ever wonder what happened to that special lady in Austin's life? Will she show up again? Reread this "Inside Wrestling Classic" from 1992 to get some insight into "Stone-Cold's" past

BEHIND BLOSSOM SPLIT!

By Chris Bernucca



OUTSIDE IT WAS unseasonably warm for the between-holiday lull of late-December in southern New York. But inside the lavish Scarsdale home of Paul E. Dangerously, the setting was considerably colder.

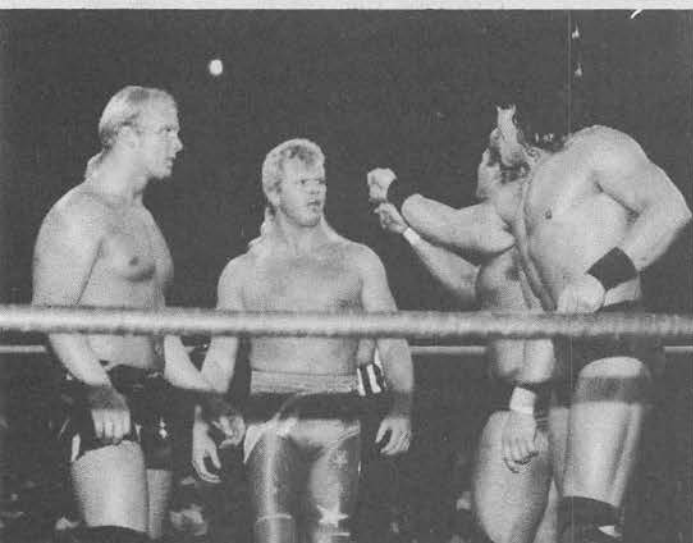
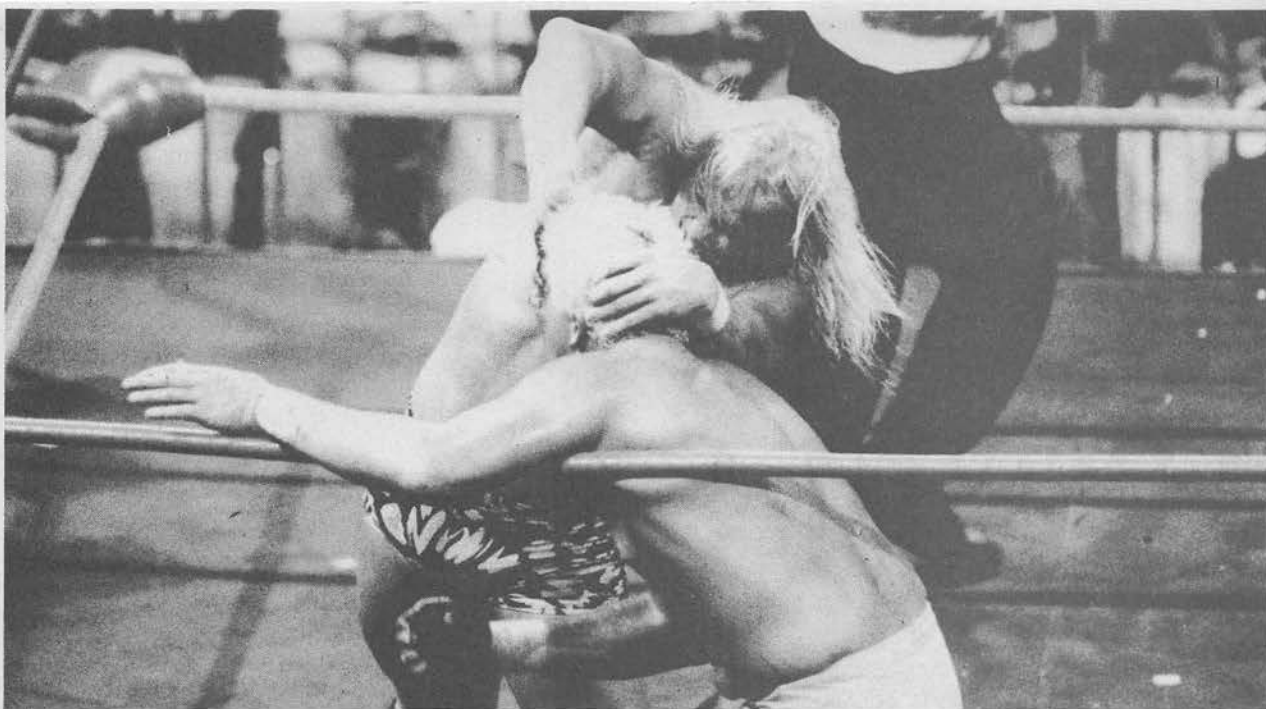
Dangerously sat forward in his high-backed leather chair, elbows

resting on the oak desk in his fully carpeted den. A bright red carnation adorned the left lapel of his gray pinstripe suit. His tie was crimson, with cream polka dots.

Madusa, wearing a shapely white jumpsuit with black pumps, ambled past the bookshelves on the walls. She wore her hair in a French braid and muttered authors' names in a barely audible whisper.

The LED window on the answering machine flashed a digital "15." There was a stack of mail six inches

When voluptuous valet Lady Blossom vanished from the side of WCW TV champion Steve Austin, rumors ran rampant throughout the federation. But we stumbled onto the *real* story: Never underestimate the power of a woman!



Despite the change in management, Austin has held on to the TV title with victories over top challengers like Dustin Rhodes (above). Since joining forces with Paul E., Austin has been paired in tag teams with other members of The Dangerous Alliance, such as "Beautiful" Bobby Eaton (left).

thick on Paul E.'s desk. And while the rest of The Dangerous Alliance rested at a midtown hotel, final arrangements still had to be made for that night's WCW card at the Byrne Meadowlands Arena.

A month ago, Paul E. had agreed to be interviewed when he arrived in the Big Apple. But a month ago, Paul E. didn't know he would be this busy. An intrepid intruder was the last thing the most powerful manager in the sport needed at the moment.

"You're just gonna have to bear with me, Shakespeare," snapped Paul E. "I was ready to hire someone to do this for me, but she didn't work out. Madusa's a big help, but

when you're on the road, this stuff piles up."

He pressed the playback button on the answering machine and began sorting the mail into four piles—press releases, bills, junk, and personal letters. Yes, even yuppie rule-breaking managers get fan mail.

The messages droned on. Two from Magnum T.A., which made Paul E. laugh out loud. One from Jim Ross, which sounded important. One from the China Club. Two from friends in Atlanta. One from *Inside Wrestling* Editor-in-Chief Craig Peters. And then ...

"YOU SLIMEBALL! YOU KNOW WHO THIS IS!! THE CHECK BOUNCED, YOU UNDERSTAND? IT

BOUNCED! I WANT MY MONEY AND I WANT IT NOW! IN CASH!! IF I DON'T GET IT, I'LL GOUGE YOUR EYES OUT!"

There was no doubt about the identity of the shrill female voice. It was The Woman Scorned. It was Lady Blossom, former valet to TV champion "Stunning" Steve Austin.

"All right, both of you, out!" said Dangerously, flipping through his Rolodex and rubbing his eyes. "I've got calls to make."

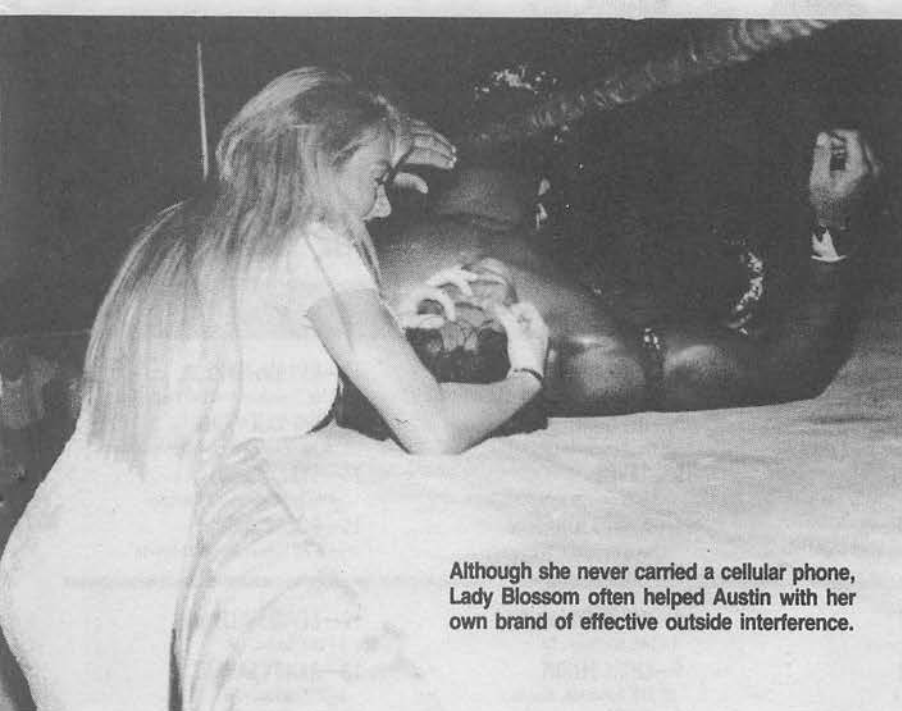
"C'mon, Hemingway," said Madusa, giggling. "I'll make us some tea."

The kitchen was as spacious as the den. It had an eight-foot refrigerator, an island with a built-in range, and every modern convenience known to man. One began to wonder if Paul E. was bouncing his mortgage payments as well.

"You see," Madusa began, "when I joined the Alliance, one of the stipulations of my contract was that I have final approval on all other female potential members. When Paul went after Steve, he knew there was no way in hell that I would let that, that witch come along with him."

Her audience of one didn't dare interrupt.

"So he bought Austin's contract from Blossom," Madusa continued.



Although she never carried a cellular phone, Lady Blossom often helped Austin with her own brand of effective outside interference.

"Paul knows that everybody has a price, even the holier-than-thou fools like yourself. People always say you can't buy happiness. Well, maybe not. But you can definitely *lease* it for a while."

The former champion checked her watch and smiled.

"That witch will be at the Meadowlands tonight, hangin' around the locker room like some groupie. She's absolutely pathetic.

"I think you'd better go," she said, taking my coffee mug. "Paul's upset, and we've got a card to get ready for."

That night at the Meadowlands, Lady Blossom was there. Dressed in a waist-length fur coat, white mini-skirt and heels, she charmed her way past a security guard.

"What did I tell you?" Madusa said with a sneer.

The blonde beauty shared a private moment with Austin, who earlier refused to discuss his change in management with the press. Minutes later, Blossom huddled with Paul E. in a barren corridor. Sharp words were exchanged, then Dangerously handed her a stuffed envelope. She thumbed through the contents and dropped the envelope in her white leather purse.

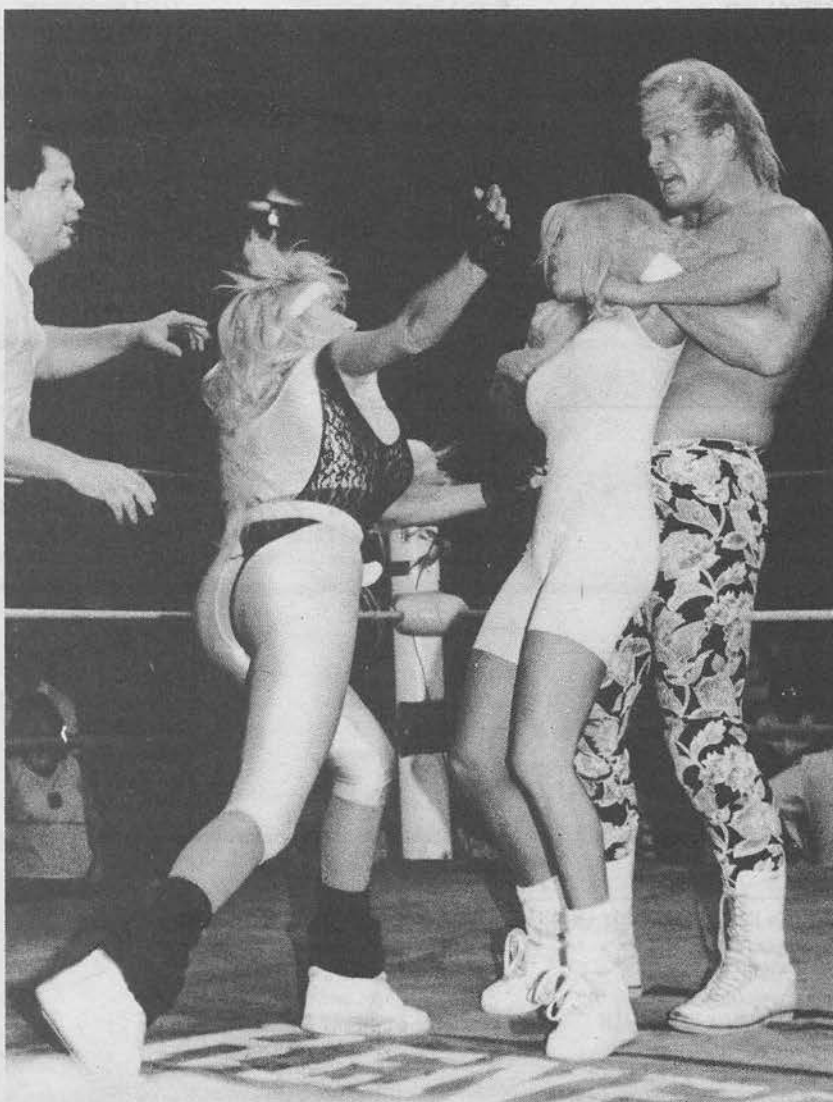
"You didn't see that," threatened

Dangerously, who joined Madusa and headed for ringside.

Blossom headed for the exit. There was a hop in her step and a smile creased her lips. She tucked a 20 in the guard's breast pocket and gave him a kiss on the cheek, leaving a lipstick silhouette that would've made Johnny B. Badd proud.

"I asked Steve what it was like working for the second-smartest manager in WCW," Blossom said before leaving. "He said, 'C,mon, gorgeous, everyone knows Paul E. is the smartest manager in the sport.'

"So I said to him, 'Maybe, Steve. But let me ask you this: If Paul E. is so smart, how come he's paying me *not* to manage you?'" □



Blossom and Austin were a fantastic team that didn't mind reversing roles on several occasions. Blossom, then using her given name, Jeannie Clarke, always got help from her man in her battles with Toni Adams last year in Texas.

OFFICIAL RATINGS

TOP 15

1—SID VICIOUS

(5) WWF World champion

2—EDDY GUERRERO

(4) U.S. heavyweight champion

3—DAVEY BOY SMITH

(-) WWF European champion

4—DEAN MALENKO

(9) No. 1 contender: WCW cruiserweight title

5—THE UNDERTAKER

(12) No. 3 contender: WWF World title

6—LEX LUGER

(7) No. 4 contender: WCW title

7—BRET HART

(6) No. 4 contender: WWF World title

8—STEVE AUSTIN

(3) No. 6 contender: WWF title

9—THE GIANT

(2) No. 3 contender: WCW title

10—RAVEN

(10) ECW heavyweight champion

11—AHMED JOHNSON

(-) No. 5 contender: WWF title

12—REY MISTERIO JR.

(-) No. 7 contender: WCW World title

13—BIG VAN VADER

(14) No. 7 contender: WWF World title

14—SYXX

(-) WCW cruiserweight champion

15—ROCKY MAIVIA

(-) WWF Intercontinental champion

WCW

1—HULK HOGAN

(1) 275, Venice Beach, CA

2—EDDY GUERRERO

(2) 221, El Paso, TX

3—DEAN MALENKO

(5) 216, Tampa, FL

4—THE GIANT

(3) 430, parts unknown

5—LEX LUGER

(4) 265, Chicago, IL

6—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

(6) 260, Tampa, FL

7—RODDY PIPER

(-) 247, Glasgow, Scotland

8—REY MISTERIO JR.

(-) 140, San Diego, CA

9—CHRIS BENOIT

(9) 218, Edmonton, Alberta

10—SYXX

(-) 212, Minneapolis, MN

11—JEFF JARRETT

(10) 230, Nashville, TN

12—KEVIN SULLIVAN

(-) 252, Boston, MA

13—RANDY SAVAGE

(-) 237, Sarasota, FL

14—LORD STEVEN REGAL

(8) 247, Blackpool, England

15—PRINCE IAUKEA

(-) 219, Honolulu, HI

WWF

1—SID VICIOUS

(4) 318, West Memphis, AR

2—ROCKY MAIVIA

(12) 272, Pearl City, HI

3—DAVEY BOY SMITH

(-) 245, Leeds, England

4—THE UNDERTAKER

(3) 328, parts unknown

5—BRET HART

(2) 235, Calgary, Alberta

6—AHMED JOHNSON

(6) 255, Pearl River, MS

7—STEVE AUSTIN

(5) 241, Dallas, TX

8—BIG VAN VADER

(9) 450, Denver, CO

9—FAAROOQ

(8) 260, Perry, GA

10—GOLDUST

(10) 254, Austin, TX

11—THE SULTAN

(-) 283, Tehran, Iran

12—HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY

(2) 279, Greenwich, CT

13—MANKIND

(11) 277, Truth or Consequences, NM

14—CRUSH

(15) 322, Kona, HI

15—FLASH FUNK

(13) 222, Denver, CO

MOST POPULAR

1—AHMED JOHNSON

Last issue: No. 2 Most Popular

2—RODDY PIPER

Last issue: No. 3 Most Popular

3—THE UNDERTAKER

Last issue: No. 7 Most Popular

4—LEX LUGER

Last issue: No. 5 Most Popular

5—THE GIANT

Last issue: No. 1 Most Popular

6—BRET HART

Last issue: No. 6 Most Popular

7—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

Last issue: No. 9 Most Popular

8—EDDY GUERRERO

Last issue: No. 8 Most Popular

9—REY MISTERIO JR.

Last issue: No. 12 Most Popular

10—GOLDUST

Last issue: No. 11 Most Popular

11—THE SANDMAN

Last issue: No. 10 Most Popular

12—CHRIS JERICHO

Last issue: No. 13 Most Popular

13—TOMMY DREAMER

Last issue: unrated

14—ROCKY MAIVIA

Last issue: unrated

15—BRIAN CHRISTOPHER

Last issue: unrated

MOST HATED

1—RANDY SAVAGE

Last issue: unrated

2—HULK HOGAN

Last issue: No. 1 Most Hated

3—STEVE AUSTIN

Last issue: No. 2 Most Hated

4—KEVIN NASH

Last issue: No. 3 Most Hated

5—SCOTT HALL

Last issue: No. 4 Most Hated

6—KEVIN SULLIVAN

Last issue: No. 7 Most Hated

7—SAVIO VEGA

Last issue: No. 8 Most Hated

8—SYXX

Last issue: No. 9 Most Hated

9—RAVEN

Last issue: No. 13 Most Hated

10—FAAROOQ

Last issue: No. 5 Most Hated

11—JERRY LAWLER

Last issue: No. 10 Most Hated

12—STEVE MCMICHAEL

Last issue: No. 12 Most Hated

13—HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY

Last issue: No. 6 Most Hated

14—BIG VAN VADER

Last issue: No. 14 Most Hated

15—CRUSH

Last issue: No. 15 Most Popular

TOP 15 TAG TEAMS

1—OWEN HART & DAVEY BOY SMITH

(3) WWF World tag team champions

2—THE GIANT & LEX LUGER

(-) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title

3—SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH

(2) WCW World tag team champions

4—DOUG FURNAS & PHIL LAFON

(4) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title

5—THE ELIMINATORS

(7) ECW tag team champions

6—THE BARBARIAN & MENG

(9) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title

7—RICK & SCOTT STEINER

(1) No. 3 contenders: WCW World tag title

8—HENRY & PHINEAS GODWINN

(6) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title

9—PUBLIC ENEMY

(14) No. 4 contenders: WCW World tag title

10—HARLEM HEAT

(5) No. 5 contenders: WCW World tag title

11—PG-13

(10) USWA tag team champions

12—JEFF JARRETT & STEVE MCMICHAEL

(-) No. 6 contenders: WCW World tag title

13—CRUSH & FAAROOQ

(-) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title

14—THE BLACKJACKS

(-) No. 4 contenders: WWF World tag title

15—SABU & ROB VAN DAM

(11) No. 1 contenders: ECW tag title

These ratings are compiled by the editors with the assistance of promoters, wrestlers, and reporters around the country, and are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and the inherent skill of each wrestler. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue... "Most Popular" and "Most Hated" ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestling fans and on mail that comes to our offices ... Championships highlighted in bold on the "Roll Call Of Champions" have changed hands since our previous issue ... The information under the championship listing indicates the date that champion won the title, who the former champion was, and where the match took place.

For period ended March 7, 1997

ROLL CALL OF CHAMPIONS

ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: MITSU HARU MISAWA
(January 20, 1997; from Kenta Kobashi; Osaka, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
TOSHI AKI KAWADA & AKIRA TAUE
(January 17, 1997; from Johnny Ace & Steve Williams; Matsumoto, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN UNITED NATIONAL CHAMPION: MITSU HARU MISAWA
(January 20, 1997; from Kenta Kobashi; Osaka, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S ALL-PACIFIC CHAMPION: TAKAKO INOUE
(November 21, 1996; from Reggie Bennett; Kobe, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S CHAMPION: RIE TAMADA
(November 21, 1996; from Kumiko Maekawa; Kobe, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: CHIKAYA NAGASHIMA & SUGAR SATO
(September 1, 1996; from Yumi Fukawa & Rie Tamada; Tokyo, Japan)

ECW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RAVEN
(December 7, 1996; from The Sandman; Philadelphia, PA)

ECW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE ELIMINATORS
(December 20, 1996; from The Gangstas; Middletown, NY)

ECW TELEVISION CHAMPION: SHANE DOUGLAS
(July 13, 1996; from Chris Jericho; Philadelphia, PA)

IWGP HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: SHINYA HASHIMOTO
(April 29, 1996; from Nobuhiko Takashi; Osaka, Japan)

IWGP TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: TATSUMI FUJINAMI & KENGO KIMURA
(January 4, 1997; from Masa Chono & Hiroyoshi Tenzan; Tokyo, Japan)

IPWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BIG SLAM
(January 11, 1997; beat Guido Falcone; Pikeville, NC)

MID-EASTERN WRESTLING FEDERATION LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION:
ADAM FLASH
(March 2, 1997; beat Steve Corino & Quinn Nash in three-way match; Baltimore, MD)

MID-EASTERN WRESTLING FEDERATION MID-ATLANTIC CHAMPION: JIMMY CICERO
(December 1, 1996; from Boo Bradley; Baltimore, MD)

NWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: DAN SEVERN
(February 24, 1995; from Chris Candido; Erlanger, KY)

NWA NORTH AMERICAN HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RECKLESS YOUTH
(September 7, 1996; beat Derek Domino; Yardville, NJ)

NWA U.S. TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE LOST BOYS
(December 7, 1996; from Downward Spiral; Mount Holly, NJ)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MITSU HARU MISAWA
(January 20, 1997; from Kenta Kobashi; Osaka, Japan)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION:
YOSHINARI OGAWA
(January 15, 1997; from Tsuyoshi Kikuchi; Tokyo, Japan)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
TOSHI AKI KAWADA & AKIRA TAUE
(January 17, 1997; from Johnny Ace & Steve Williams; Matsumoto, Japan)

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION:
JULIO SANCHEZ
(January 24, 1997; from Freight Train Jones; Reading, PA)

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION:
PAT SHAMROCK
(January 11, 1997; from Diablos Macabre; Reading, PA)

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
ACE DARLING & MARK MEST
(December 27, 1996; from Double Delight; Reading, PA)

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: ITALIAN STALLION
(February 22, 1997; from George South; Morganton, NC)

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION:
MADD MAXXINE
(August 24, 1996; beat Black Angel; Forest City, NC)

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
CRUEL CONNECTION II & FLAMING YOUTH
(January 18, 1997; beat The Overlords; Gastonia, NC)

TRI-STAR WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TITLE HELD UP
(Most recently held by Jimmy Sharpe)

TRI-STAR WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: CHUCK COLT & RICK JUSTICE
(May 10, 1996; from The New One Man Gang & Joel Travis; Rossville, GA)

USWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: JERRY LAWLER
(November 16, 1996; from The Colorado Kid; Memphis, TN)

USWA SOUTHERN CHAMPION: ELIJAH
(February 9, 1997; from Brian Christopher; Memphis, TN)

USWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: PG-13
(January 18, 1997; from Steven Dunn & Flash Flanagan; Memphis, TN)

WCW CRUISERWEIGHT CHAMPION: SYXX
(February 23, 1997; from Dean Malenko; San Francisco, Ca)

WCW TELEVISION CHAMPION: PRINCE IAUKEA
(February 17, 1997; from Lord Steven Regal; Tampa, FL)

WCW U.S. CHAMPION: EDDY GUERRERO
(December 29, 1996; beat Dallas Page in tournament final; Nashville, TN)

WCW WORLD CHAMPION: HULK HOGAN
(August 10, 1996; from The Giant; Sturgis, SD)

WCW WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH
(October 27, 1996; from Harlem Heat; Las Vegas, NV)

WCW WORLD WOMEN'S CHAMPION: AKIRA HOKUTO
(December 29, 1996; beat Madusa in tournament final; Nashville, TN)

WORLD WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: THE ICON
(December 7, 1996; from East L.A. Angel; Woodbury, NJ)

WORLD WRESTLING ALLIANCE TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
THE HIMALAYAN PLAYERS
(December 7, 1996; won tournament; Woodbury, NJ)

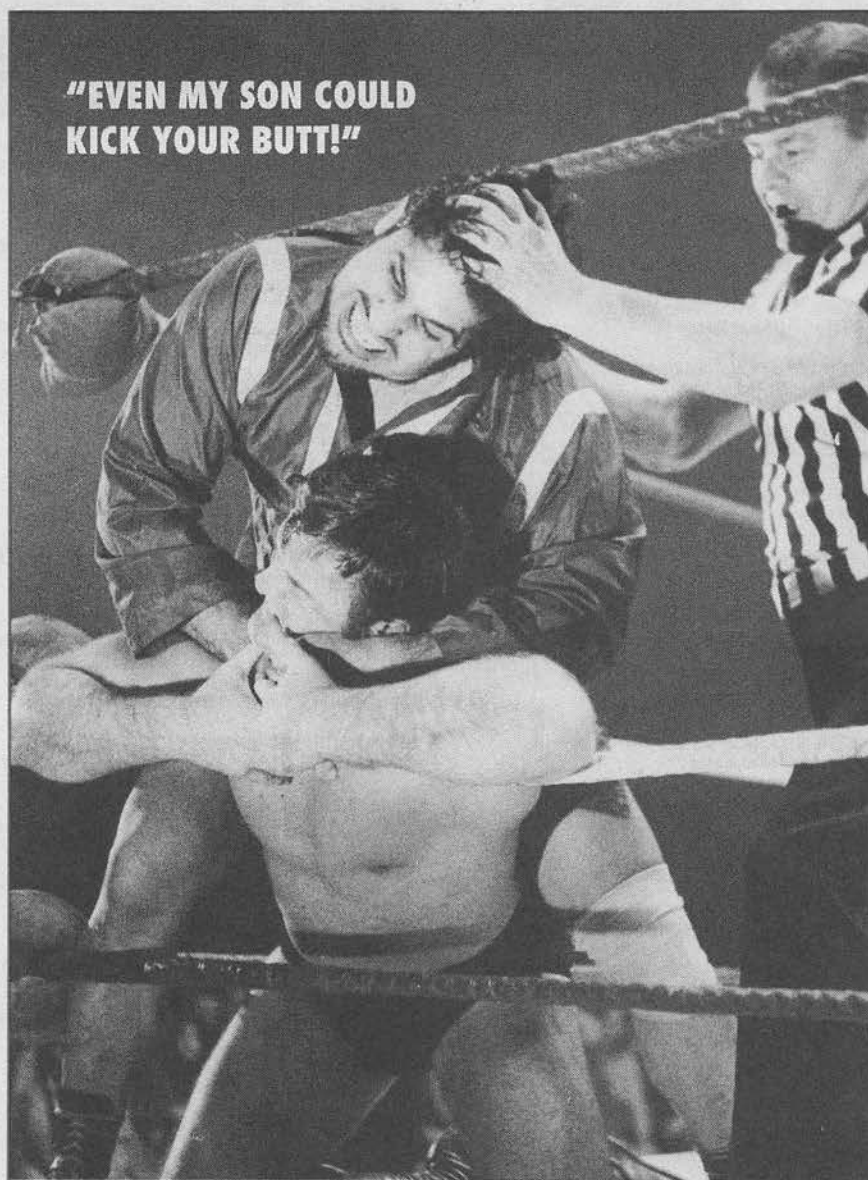
WWF INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: ROCKY MAIVIA
(February 13, 1997; from Hunter Hearst Helmsley; Lowell, MA)

WWF WORLD CHAMPION: "PSYCHO" SID VICIOUS
(February 17, 1997; from Bret Hart; Nashville, TN)

WWF WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: OWEN HART & DAVEY BOY SMITH
(September 22, 1996; from The Smokin' Gunns; Philadelphia, PA)

BLAST FROM THE PAST

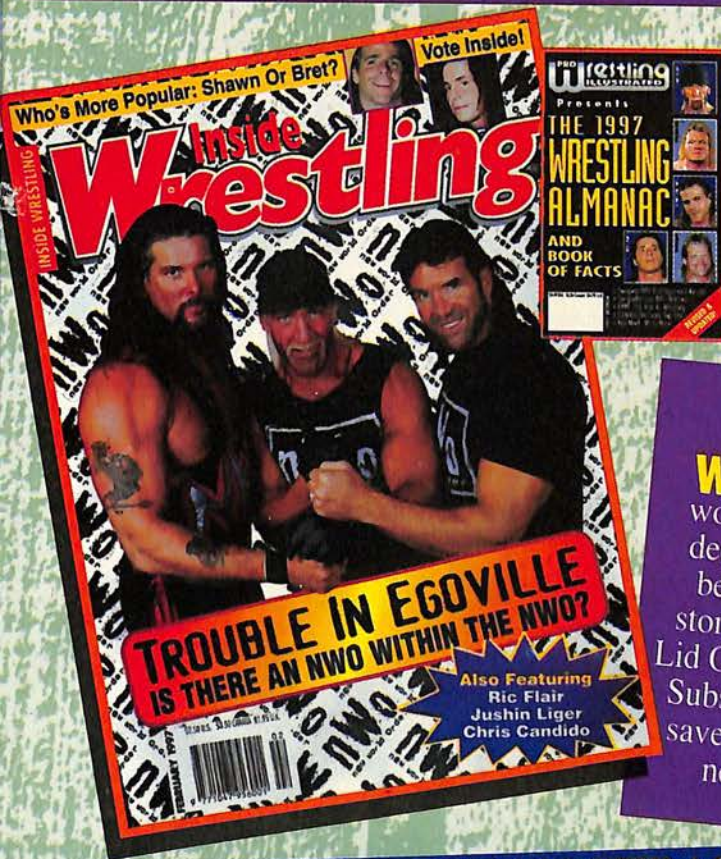
This Month In Wrestling History



TIGER JEET SINGH vs. JACQUES ROUGEAU SR. **June 1974**

Back in the mid-1970s in Montreal, Tiger Jeet Singh loved getting his hands on any Rougeau, but Jacques Sr. was his favorite member of the famous wrestling family to torture. Singh is 22 years older now, and probably a little wiser and more mellow, too. Let's see, Jacques Sr. occasionally does some broadcasting work for the WWF. Tiger's son, Tiger Ali, just signed with the WWF. His father might accompany him to the ring sometimes. This old feud couldn't start up again, could it?

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